the weekly
Standard

OCTOBER 14, 1996 $2.95

THE FOCUS GROUP FRAUD

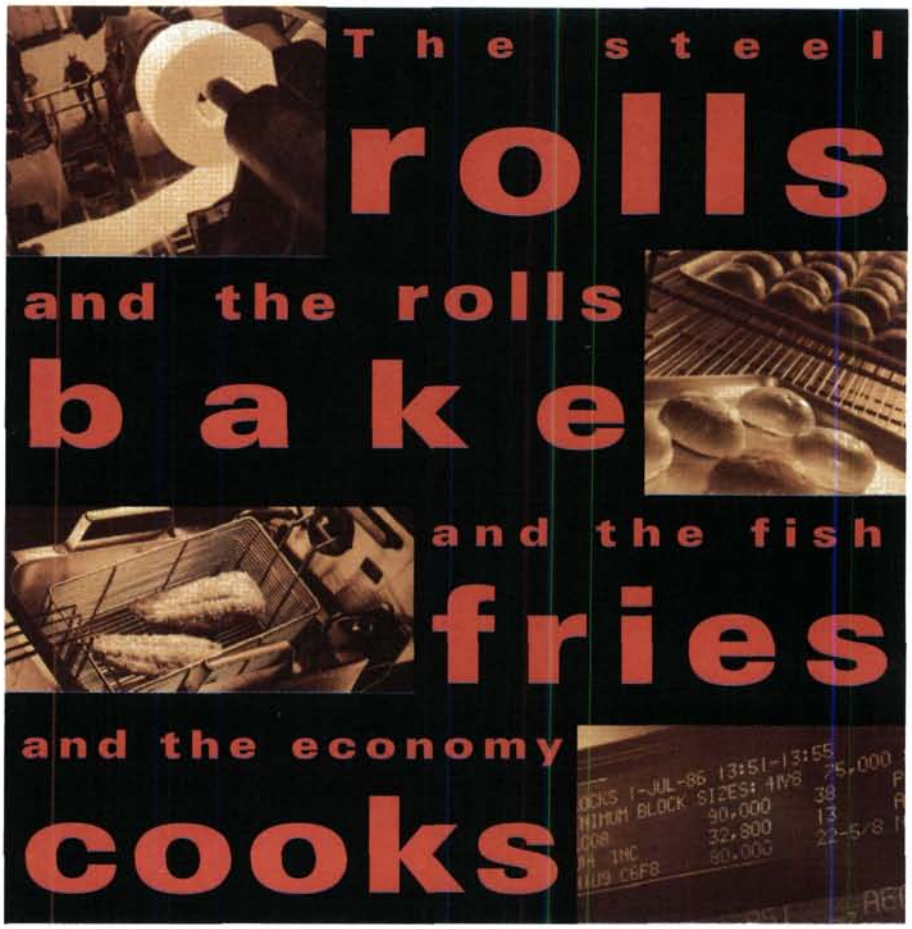
by Andrew Ferguson

Bibi's Tunnel, Yasser's War
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

JFK: The Great American Novel
NOEMIE EMERY

#BXNFMVD******5-DIGIT 94301
#943010555UNZ R2# MAY 12 97 048500
217000 94301 0555 UNZ R08 000519
RON UNZ 0055 001
371 **C 003
555 BRYANT ST
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



New efficient electric technologies can give American business a big competitive edge. How? By saving energy. Lots of it. Which allows us to produce higher quality goods faster and for less money.

■ Electrically powered steel mills use 50% less energy and cut production time significantly, which results in higher profitability. Commercial ovens and electric induction fryers cut cooking time and energy use. They also emit less heat which reduces kitchen cooling costs. Infrared auto paint drying cuts energy use by 90% and greatly speeds production. ■ These savings go right to America's bottom line. And, the same energy efficiency that makes the economy hum helps keep the air clean. American business is more productive than it's ever been. Today's energy-efficient electric technologies are one of the primary reasons why.

Electricity

The power to make life better

© Edison Electric Institute ,1996

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5 • OCTOBER 14, 1996

2 SCRAPBOOK

4 CORRESPONDENCE

6 CASUAL
John Podhoretz praises an old rival.

7 EDITORIAL
Two Cheers for the 104th

8 THE MINI-CLINTONS
Democratic candidates follow their leader. *by* **MATTHEW REES**

10 PARDON ME, MS. RODHAM
If we played by Watergate's rules . . . *by* **GARY SCHMITT**

11 AN ENTITLEMENT IS BORN
The GOP Congress midwifes a monster. *by* **DAVID FRUM**

13 PULITZER BAIT IN PHILLY
A newspaper series fails big. *by* **CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL**

40 PARODY
A Celebration of Expectoration

Cover art
by Sean Delonas

18 THE FOCUS-GROUP FRAUD
They're beloved of consultants, aped by politicians, and a menace. *by* **ANDREW FERGUSON**

23 BIBI'S TUNNEL, YASSER'S WAR
Rather than honor his commitments, Arafat looses his army. *by* **CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER**

27 THE SCEPTERED ISLE'S BILL CLINTON
Labour's Tony Blair is ahead in the polls and sounding familiar. *by* **IRWIN M. STELZER**

BOOKS

31 JFK: THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL Why Camelot still fascinates. *by* **NOEMIE EMERY**

35 JUDY CHICAGOLAND Where art is more political (and anatomical) than artistic. *by* **PIA CATTON**

MUSIC

37 MIRACLE OF POP Rock is knocked, defended—and redeemed. *by* **MARK GAUVREAU JUDGE**

William Kristol, *Editor and Publisher* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor* **John Podhoretz,** *Deputy Editor*

David Tell, *Opinion Editor* **David Brooks, Andrew Ferguson,** *Senior Editors* **Richard Starr, Claudia Winkler,** *Managing Editors*
Christopher Caldwell, *Senior Writer* **Jay Nordlinger,** *Associate Editor*
Tucker Carlson, Matt Labash, Matthew Rees, *Staff Writers*
Kent Bain, *Art Director* **Jacqueline Goldberg,** *Assistant Art Director* **Daniel McKivergan,** *Research Director* **Pia Catton,** *Reporter*
J. Bottum, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, P. J. O'Rourke, *Contributing Editors*

James L. Pitts, *Deputy Publisher* **Jennifer L. Felten,** *Business Manager* **Francine M. McMahon,** *Advertising Director*
James D. McVey, *Advertising Consultant* **Dianne S. Mace,** *Subscription Director* **Polly Coreth, Doris Ridley, Carolyn Wimmer,** *Executive Assistants*
Alison Maresco, *Account Executive* **Catherine Edwards, Kimberly Mackey, Victorino Matus,** *Staff Assistants* **Josephine DeLorenzo,** *Publicity*

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly, except for the third week of July and the last week of December, by News America Publishing Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Send subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153. Yearly subscriptions, $79.96; Canadian, $99.96; foreign postage extra. Cover price, $2.95 ($3.50 Canadian). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, address changes, and subscription inquiries to: THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Customer Service, P.O. Box 710, Radnor, PA 19088-0710. If possible include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. For subscription customer service, call 1-800-983-7600. Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is (202) 293-4900. Advertising Production: call Natalie Harwood, (610) 293-8540. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 930, Radnor, PA 19088-0930. Copyright 1996, News America Publishing Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Publishing Incorporated.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jack Kemp, Saddam Hussein, & Jude Wanniski

We've been trying to keep you up to date on the relationship between Jack Kemp and his longtime guru, Jude Wanniski, ever since Kemp's selection as Bob Dole's running mate. Two weeks ago, Kemp took Wanniski's advice and praised Louis Farrakhan and the Million Man March. Now things are really getting weird. Is Wanniski against bombing Iraq? Well, then, it seems Jack will be too!

On October 1, Kemp spoke before a crowd of women in Tucson, a speech whose purpose was, according to a campaign spokesperson, to reach out to "soccer moms and . . . suburban women." It seems what women really want is a president who acts in the national interest only after getting an international permission slip. "Mr. Kemp," reported the *New York Times*, "even attempted to cast foreign policy in . . . a feminine light, saying that a Dole Administration would apply the type of diplomacy that a mother would choose and not 'bomb Baghdad without talking to someone' . . ."

On the same day, Wanniski wrote a memo to former undersecretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz criticizing a Wolfowitz *Wall Street Journal* piece about the danger Saddam poses to U.S. interests. "He is no threat to his neighbors or to the region," Wanniski wrote. "This is why the President had to bomb Iraq without asking Saddam's friends and neighbors if it was a good thing to do. They would have told him to cool it." Presumably, all Iraq needs is a stable, gold-backed currency and then all will be well there!

Will Wanniski succeed in turning the "party of Lincoln" into the "party of McGovern"? Keep watching this space.

Media Bias Goes Kerflooey

The Sept. 5 *Chicago Tribune* featured the following correction (dug up by Steve Allen of the Internet Guild): "In her Wednesday Commentary page column, Linda Bowles stated that President Clinton and his former campaign advisor Dick Morris both were 'guilty of callous unfaithfulness to their wives and children.' Neither man has admitted to being or been proven to have been unfaithful. *The Tribune* regrets the error." Hey, what a blooper that was by Linda Bowles! Dick Morris? Unfaithful? Bill Clinton? Unfaithful? Where could anybody get such an idea? Certainly glad the *Tribune* caught it.

No corrections, however, from the *New York Times*, whose Political Briefing column last week identified Jesse Helms, *en passant*, as "one of the most anti-homosexual lawmakers in Congress." Huh? Is it fair to label opposition to making homosexuals a protected class under federal civil-rights law, or resistance to other policies promoted by gay activists, "anti-homosexual"? Would the *Times* call a legislator who has voted against the Christian Coalition's agenda "anti-Christian"?

Two days later, the *Times*'s Political Briefing began an item on the proposed Parental Rights Amendment on Colorado's ballot as follows: "Colorado voters appear poised to hand Christian fundamentalists a striking victory." Fundamentalists? The main sponsor of Parental Rights Amendment efforts around the country, a group called Of the People, is a secular conservative organization. The arguments made on the amendment's behalf are more often libertarian and populist than "Christian fundamentalist" (whatever that would mean in this context).

Note to Joe Lelyveld: This is what we call, in technical parlance, "media bias."

Mark Singer Loves a Mad Bomber

Four years ago, a man known to the residents of Indiana as the "Speedway bomber" surfaced in the press with a story that *really* intrigued Garry Trudeau, the *Doonesbury* guy. As a drug dealer in the early 1970s, Brett Kimberlin claimed, he had sold marijuana on a number of occasions to a college student named Dan Quayle. Kimberlin made the charges from his cell in federal prison, where he was serving a 51-year sentence for marijuana smuggling, as well as for blowing off most of a man's legs with a homemade bomb in the Indianapolis suburb of Speedway in 1978. Kimberlin and his supporters (among them Clinton friend Cody Shearer), however, had another explanation for his imprisonment: Kimberlin, they insisted, was a "politi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Scrapbook

cal prisoner," locked down by a Bush administration eager to silence one of its most potent critics.

Vaporous though Kimberlin's charges were, they were nonetheless used as ammunition by the Clinton campaign, then struggling to overcome its candidate's admitted drug use, and were swallowed whole by many in the press. Among those taken in was a reporter at the *New Yorker* named Mark Singer, who dutifully wrote a pro-Kimberlin, anti-Quayle piece before the 1992 election. "I believed that he was telling the truth about Quayle," Singer wrote recently, though he had no evidence. Plus, Singer admits, "Ardently, inordinately, I wanted the Democrats to win the election."

Four years later, Kimberlin is back, released from prison and living in the Washington area. And so is Mark Singer, who has just written a second Kimberlin story for the *New Yorker*, a complement to his forthcoming book on the subject. Singer's findings? Brett Kimberlin is a criminal sociopath who probably never even met Dan Quayle, much less sold him nickel bags. The writer reached this conclusion only hesitantly, years after it had become clear to just about everyone else around Kimberlin—including his drug-dealer friends, none of them hampered by the deep insights that beset investigative reporters—that the man was utterly delusional. Still, Singer is not willing simply to eat crow and apologize. His new findings about Kimberlin, Singer concludes, don't "negate what I wrote four years ago—which, to this day, remains largely true." Which leads us to the following question for Mark Singer: In what way can reporting be "largely true" if it is actually based on the lies of a mad bomber?

Get This

The headline of the week, or maybe the year, appeared in the Sept. 11 issue of *The Hill*. It concerned a certain retired congressman with a taste for Hill pages who shared his gender, if not his generation. The headline: "Studds' Open Seat Draws Mass. Crowd."

Buy Andy Ferguson's Book

It is with pride that The Weekly Standard greets the publication of senior editor Andrew Ferguson's first book, *Fools' Names, Fools' Faces*, which binds together 33 of his essays. Andy is the writer of whom Bill Moyers once said: "If he were a gentleman, I would challenge him to a duel." It features an introduction by P. J. O'Rourke and a blurb by George F. Will so amazing that we felt we had to reprint it here: "Don't just stand here in this bookstore trying to decide whether to buy this book. Read a representative paragraph—say, the first paragraph on page 130. Done? Now go pay for the book." (That representative paragraph, by the way, comes from Andy's piece on Don Imus, published here in April.) *Fools' Names, Fools' Faces* has been brought out by Atlantic Monthly Press at the entirely reasonable price of $22.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Correspondence

Between Isolation and Intervention

In your editorial "Between Iraq and a Hard Place" (Sept. 30), you argued that my past opposition to the use of force in situations where our vital security interests were not threatened (e.g., Bosnia) made my recent criticism of the administration's response to Iraq inconsistent and thus incredible.

I cheerfully plead guilty to the charge that I am reluctant to risk American lives in conflicts that do not threaten U.S. security. But I reject the charge that my support for stronger military action against Iraq is an exception to that reluctance, and dismiss the implied charge that I represent an increasing Republican aversion to an interventionist foreign policy that should restrain my criticism of administration vacillation and weakness.

I did not call for stronger military action against Iraq because of an impulse to take sides in a Kurdish civil war. Protecting our interest in the Persian Gulf's stability requires our firm insistence that Saddam Hussein abide by every commitment imposed on him by the United States, the U.N. Security Council, and the Desert Storm coalition. If Saddam successfully challenges one directive, he will soon challenge others. And until he meets with firm resistance he will continue to test our resolve until he once again poses an immediate threat to the United States and our allies.

This is not to say that the fate of the Kurds in Iraq is unrelated to U.S. security. We promised the Kurds protection from Saddam, and the administration's complete abandonment of them deserves criticism. American credibility is a strategic interest. When we fail to keep our word, we are less secure.

As the editors note, I opposed U.S. airstrikes in Bosnia. My opposition was based on more than my fear that "a single American pilot" might be shot down. (However, I caution STANDARD editors not to treat the loss of one American as a concern that merits derision.) I feared that the occasional airstrike was bound to be ineffectual. Gaining and holding ground is the measure of military success. To launch a few airstrikes and hope for the best is not a defensible military strategy and usually initiates the kind of offensive incrementalism that has led us to disaster in the past.

I believe my record on foreign-policy questions is that of a believer in strong, global American leadership. I strongly support maintaining our alliances, the expansion of NATO, and our military presence in the Pacific. I spoke out for a more aggressive approach toward the North Korean nuclear program, suggesting that if all else failed we would have to use force to destroy that country's reactors. I even supported President Bush's decision to use our military to alleviate famine in Somalia. These are hardly the views of an isolationist. But an interventionist foreign policy does not require the use of force in all conflicts that succeed in getting CNN's and our attention.

In 1983, I opposed the deployment of our Marines to Lebanon. In 1991, I supported Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Does the former position make me an isolationist and the latter a hypocrite? I like to believe that it makes me an interventionist with sound judgment about when and how to use force and about what causes are worth the loss of American lives.

SEN. JOHN S. MCCAIN
WASHINGTON, DC

Love Those Tax Cuts

I was pleased to read William Tucker's valuable article "Why, and How, Tax Cuts Really Do Work" (Sept. 30). The multiplier effect of tax cuts has worked wonders on the economies of Michigan, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and California. This comes as no surprise to those who have been willing to study the economics rather than the politics of this issue. Since the Kennedy administration we have had ample evidence of how tax cuts can stimulate growth. Liberals and the press, however, seem unwilling to give supply-side economics its due by separating the straightforward financial data from the complex political spending decisions.

Those who blame the Reagan tax cuts for the huge deficits of the 1980s ignore both the dramatic increase in receipts to the government during that decade and the inefficiencies of having let Washington disburse too much of our wealth. Without realizing it, they make the perfect case against the Clinton "targeted" tax breaks, which are scarcely better than new government programs. And they make the case for Dole's across-the-board tax cuts: In a market economy, individuals and families make the efficient choice of how to spend their own money.

BRUCE BLOSIL
PROVO, UT

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

TITLE OF PUBLICATION: The Weekly Standard
PUBLICATION NO.: 0001-3911
DATE OF FILING: 10/1/96
FREQUENCY OF ISSUE: 50 Issues/year
NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 50
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $79.96

COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St, NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617

COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHER: The Weekly Standard, 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036

FULL NAME AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR: PUBLISHER: William Kristol, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617

MANAGING EDITORS: Richard Starr and Claudia Winkler, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC, 20036-4617

OWNER: News America Publications, Inc., 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036

KNOWN BONDHOLDERS, MORTGAGEES, AND OTHER SECURITY HOLDERS OWNING OR HOLDING 1 PERCENT OR MORE OF TOTAL AMOUNT OF BONDS, MORTGAGES, OR OTHER SECURITIES.: News T. Ventures, Inc., News T. Publications, Inc., News T. Printing, Inc., News T. Capital, Inc., NAFI Finance, Inc., 32 Loockerman Square, Suite L100 Dover, DE 19901

EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION	AVERAGE NO. COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS	ACTUAL NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE
TOTAL NO. COPIES	105,674	100,414
PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	9,926	8,252
Mail Subscription (*Paid and/or requested*)	65,711	67,923
TOTAL PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION	75,637	76,175
FREE DISTRIBUTION BY MAIL (Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free)	3,389	1,916
FREE DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE THE MAIL (Carriers or Other Means)	750	750
TOTAL FREE DISTRIBUTION	4,139	2,666
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	79,776	78,841
COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED Office Use, Leftovers, Spoiled	1,394	1,650
Return from News Agents	24,504	19,923
TOTAL	105,674	100,414
PERCENT PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION	94.8	96.6

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete
John Podhoretz, Deputy Editor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What's Wrong With This Picture?

College Administrators Think It's Just Fine.

They want to give their students an incomplete picture. One that only includes speakers from the Left.

But students bold enough to take action can bring balance to their campus. With the help of Young America's Foundation you can sponsor speakers at your school who will have a powerful impact on its intellectual life. On April 30 Young America's Foundation helped students of Southeast Missouri State University sponsor Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Over 2,400 students and faculty heard Justice Thomas—a larger audience than any other speaker on campus. At Northwestern University, 900 students came to a Young America's Foundation lecture by Vice-President Dan Quayle.

Whether the speaker is Walter Williams, William F. Buckley, Dinesh D'Souza, Michael Medved, or one of the scores of conservative lecturers available, a speaker sponsored by Young America's Foundation is always one of the best attended programs on campus.

So don't let your administrators or faculty tell you that students don't want to hear a conservative speaker. Do not let the likes of Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Donna Shalala, and Cornel West control the 1996-97 campus debate by default. Join the battle to bring balance to America's college campuses. Call Young America's Foundation today.

YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION

F.M. Kirby Freedom Center
110 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170
703-318-9608

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

Just Toobin Marvelous for Words

I finished Jeffrey Toobin's *The Run of His Life* last night, and it's a terrific book, and you don't know how hard it was for me to write those words: "a terrific book." Surely you've caught Toobin on one or another show this past month, talking about his account of the O.J. Simpson murder case; he's been on a wildly successful media blitz that has resulted in the book's debut at No. 2 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. You've seen him, cool-voiced, eloquent, glasses ringing his eyes, the very picture of a sober legal journalist in his mid-30s. I've seen him, too, and what I want to know is: *Glasses? Since when does Jeff Toobin wear glasses? I never saw him wear glasses back in the pre-soft-lens days when we* all *wore glasses! Maybe he doesn't really* need *glasses. Maybe he's only wearing them for effect. How big do you think his advance was from Random House? Why am I thinking in italics?*

Because Jeff Toobin is my lifelong rival. Well, not exactly lifelong; we only met when entering seventh grade at a tiny New York City private school. But we started getting in each other's way back then. In high school, we were up for the same parts in school plays and were fellow staffers on the newspaper; in fact, I have it on good authority (I cannot reveal my sources, even now, more than 20 years after the fact) that in eighth grade he sought to prevent my recruitment to the newspaper staff, perhaps on grounds of my juvenile conservatism. This was the same year that a McGovern organizer came to a school-wide assembly in our gym and asked if anybody in the place was for Nixon. I raised my hand. It was the only hand raised. There were 300 kids in that gym.

I got on the paper in ninth grade anyway, but Jeff's Machiavellian maneuver proved diabolically successful. His longer tenure on the staff ended in our senior year with him editor and me a sub-editor, though these sorts of hierarchical distinctions were pretty much meaningless on a mimeographed sheet that came out every couple of weeks, generating no interest in the school and only slightly greater interest among those of us on staff.

We liked talking about politics and read a lot of the same books, and hung around a lot in our senior year—a year which culminated in his writing a really nice and sentimental tribute next to his picture in what he took to be my yearbook. Only it wasn't my yearbook; it was *his own* yearbook. When his children look at his senior photo, they'll have to read something about me.

I bumped into Jeff a few times on the streets of New York during college and afterward but heard little of him until it turned out he was trying to send my brother-in-law to jail. This is no joke. My brother-in-law, Elliott Abrams, spent five years of his life under the siege of the Iran-contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh, and it turned out that Jeff was one of the lawyers specifically assigned to get Elliott. Later, he wrote a book called *Opening Arguments* about his time with Walsh's office in which he acknowledged that the pursuit of Elliott was unjust. Yet he still wrote about Elliott in a mingy, ad hominem way that I found, and still find, itself a form of prosecutorial indiscretion.

One night, just as that book was coming out, I arrived early for dinner at a Georgetown restaurant and went down the street to a local bookstore. Walking to the back in search of the fiction section, I literally ran into Jeff, who was having a book signing for *Opening Arguments*. Face to face, I felt I wouldn't be able to forgive myself if I just smiled and exchanged pleasantries. "You know, you caused my family a world of grief and trouble," I said. He mumbled something about the First Amendment, Elliott getting a say and Jeff getting a say. It was an excruciating moment, for him and for me. (He got some measure of revenge a few years later after I published a book; "glad to see you *finally* between hardcovers," he said in yet another accidental bookstore encounter, this time in front of the big Barnes and Noble ten blocks from our old high school in Manhattan.)

So it was with some wariness that I began reading his coverage of the O.J. trial in the *New Yorker*, only to find it well-written, well-reported, and compelling—all qualities his book shares, and more still. *The Run of His Life* is almost flawless, an account of the Simpson case that manages to be comprehensive and fair while still being damning of this signal event in exactly the right way (just as he was unfairly damning of Elliott).

He's getting rich from it too. I don't begrudge it for so impressive a book. But come on, Jeff—what's with the glasses?

John Podhoretz

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

Two Cheers for the 104th

Democrats insist, Republicans privately acknowledge, and the newspapers generally agree that the GOP's 104th Congress ends in disappointment. But none of them can convincingly explain precisely how or why.

Is it, as the *New York Times* editorial page suggests, a matter of procedural failure? "Much of what the radicals promised in the Contract With America," the paper of record casually announces, "did not get done." But it did. House majority leader Dick Armey claims his party has, by some accounting, accomplished "65 percent" of its ten-point program. Be that as it may. In bulk terms, at least, much of the contract truly is law.

A welfare reform matched for significance and promise by only a handful of legislative initiatives in this century. The line-item veto. A crime-control measure. Adoption incentives and child-support enforcement provisions. A ban on unfunded federal mandates to the states. And an end to Congress's exemption from the edicts it imposes on others.

All of them items in the contract. And all of them signed by the president. So the 104th has not been a Congress of "unproductive gridlock" like its Democratic predecessor, which closed in 1994 in abject chaos, voteless on most major leadership goals.

Nor is it entirely fair to complain, as so many complainers now do, especially on the right, that the past two years of congressional Gingrichism have proved a failure of ambition. It's true. We were promised a "revolution." But that was always an unfortunate choice of words, in our view. A congressional majority without sufficient votes to override vetoes cannot, of course, achieve a real revolution against presidential opposition. And "revolution" makes a poor fit with the mood and purpose of political conservatism, in any case.

Still, if Speaker Gingrich's grandiloquent promise of revolution was meant simply to imply the major advancement of that conservatism, he has delivered in spades. The 104th Congress has begun the long overdue, market-based reform of the nation's ludicrous farm price-support system. It has passed a deregulatory telecommunications law, the first in more than 30 years. It has reduced federal spending on domestic discretionary programs below levels that existed when Democrats controlled the purse.

And this Congress has advanced the conservative agenda in a number of important instances that did *not* result in a new law. In this session, Republicans have once again blocked an assault on constitutional speech rights masquerading as campaign finance reform. They have conducted a loud and serious debate about partial-birth abortion, an argument that has for the first time in living memory actually raised sufficient doubts about the morality of the nation's pro-choice regime to change some people's minds on the subject.

All in all, an impressive ideological—even political—triumph. Limited government, modern conservatism's *cri de coeur*, is for the first time in 60 years a winning argument. President Clinton refuses to dispute it, which is probably the most important reason he seems so likely to win a smashing reelection victory a few weeks from now. Even those Democrats who would unseat conservatism's congressional avatars refuse to dispute its accomplishments. Tom Daschle, the would-be Democratic Senate leader, says, "I don't see any legislation we would attempt to undo."

Very telling. The last two years of the first Clinton administration haven't been Bill Clinton's at all. They have been Newt's. Congress now dominates American politics as it hasn't since the days of Uncle Joe Cannon.

And still the whole enterprise does have an air of defeat about it. This has to do with the budget battle of last December, of course. It was a disaster born of nearsighted Republican enthusiasm. They thought that by mere manipulation of existing interest groups and "coalitions" they might remake the political present in their own image. It doesn't work. It never works. Major, reality-upending designs of political philosophy require careful, time-consuming means: persistent national persuasion, subsidiary victories, veto-proof majorities. Or a president who unambiguously shares the goal.

We will probably not get such a president on November 5. There's an outside chance, if the presidential election goes badly enough, that Republican turnout will be so depressed as to allow—in what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

should be an incumbent's year of unusual public satisfaction—the Democratic party to sneak back into full-scale power. If that horror is avoided, and if conservatism is to be jump-started in the next two years or four, the Republican party will have to recover the political touch and patience that produced such a remarkable 104th Congress in the first place.

—David Tell, for the Editors

THE MINI-CLINTONS

by Matthew Rees

Lansing, Michigan

DEBBIE STABENOW IS THIS YEAR'S cookie-cutter Democratic congressional candidate. For 16 years in the Michigan legislature, she carved out a reliably liberal record. She was slightly to the left of her district but made up for it with tireless constituent service and never had any trouble getting reelected. Now, though, she wants to knock off Republican freshman Dick Chrysler and represent the eighth district of Michigan in Congress, so she's forsaking her liberal past and emphasizing her moderate views, on issues from taxes to welfare. Ask her staff whether there's any issue on which she and President Clinton disagree, and they're stumped to come up with one.

Stabenow is just one out of scores of Clintonized Democrats seeking House and Senate seats. They're running on moderate platforms that mimic the president's breathtakingly modest agenda: no new taxes, no major increases in spending, protection of education and the environment. Many are also Clintonesque in demagoguing issues such as Medicare and Medicaid. And just as this strategy is working for Clinton, it seems to be working for those who have embraced his agenda. Candidates supported by the New Democrat Network, a new political action committee that contributes to moderates, are in unexpectedly competitive races.

So it's unsurprising to hear liberal House minority leader Richard Gephardt, never one to pass up a political opportunity, say, "We're all New Democrats now." And why is that? "We have to be," Gephardt told the *Washington Post*. "Times change." Gephardt and other Democrats have concluded they need to scrap their liberalism if they are to win back a congressional majority. Thus, no more massive new spending programs to fund anti-poverty efforts; instead, reinvent government through "public-private partnerships."

Whether Democrats like Gephardt actually believe in a moderate agenda, and whether they would have the discipline to implement it, is questionable. But if they win back the House or the Senate, they will have a slew of rhetorically moderate New Democrat candidates to thank. Some of these candidates could be mistaken for moderate Republicans, but none could be mistaken for liberal Democrats.

Many have spent more time in private business—usually a recruiting ground for the Republican party—than the public sector. Jill Docking of Kansas is a wealthy stockbroker who advocates simplifying the tax code, supports the welfare bill, and opposes federal funding of abortion. She's also one of the few Democrats to sign the Taxpayers' Protection Pledge, which conservative activist Grover Norquist distributes to candidates, asking them to promise not to vote to raise taxes while in office. "I am not the Left. I am not the Right. I'm the middle," says Docking.

Both Tom Bruggere, in Oregon, and Mark Warner, in Virginia, made millions as entrepreneurs. They also advocate conservative remedies to crime. Bruggere supports mandatory prison sentences without parole for career criminals, while Warner supports the death penalty, three-strikes-and-you're-out, and trying juveniles as adults. Judy Hancock was an international-trade lawyer in Kansas City before declaring her House candidacy. She supports free trade, a balanced budget amendment, and welfare reform. Two who have spent time in government—Ben Nelson and Randy Rathbun—weren't exactly liberals. As governor of Nebraska, Nelson was a leader in the fight against unfunded mandates from Washington, saying he was "not the branch manager of the federal government." He's also pro-life and anti-gun control, and he reduced the growth of state spending by two-thirds. Rathbun, meanwhile, served as U.S. attorney for Kansas from August 1993 until January 1996, overseeing prosecutions for violent crime.

The moderate posture of so many Democratic candidates complicates the Republican effort to keep control of Congress. So does the fact that many of the Democratic "moderates" are running against conservative Republicans. "It's harder if you're way out on the right to accuse someone of being way out on the left," reasons Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute. Thus Republicans such as House speaker Newt Gingrich have begun highlighting the threat posed by liberals such as Ron Dellums, Charlie Rangel, and John Conyers, who are likely to chair

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

committees if the Democrats take control of the House.

Yet if this triumvirate is to seize power, people like Debbie Stabenow will have to get elected and vote for them as chairmen. Stabenow has told Gephardt she wants to see a shakeup in committee assignments. But for all her talk of reform, she is a career politician who understands the perils of trying to revamp an established system. She was president of her junior class in high school and was elected county commissioner at the age of 24. She also spent 12 years in the state House and four in the state Senate, before seeking the Democratic party's gubernatorial nomination in 1994. Her campaign emphasized that she was a mother of two, but when this soft touch wasn't working she aired a series of vicious and misleading ads against one of her opponents, then-representative Howard Wolpe. He narrowly defeated her, but not before asking a question of Stabenow many have asked of Clinton: "Is there nothing she would not do to gain election?"

Debbie Stabenow

Kent Lemon

Her cutthroat approach didn't go over well in Michigan, but it won her admirers in Washington. Before long, the calls started coming from Gephardt and the White House urging her to run against freshman representative Dick Chrysler, a conservative who eked out a narrow victory in 1994 and whose personality makes Al Gore seem like a live wire. Her decision to run came as little surprise to local political observers. Like Clinton, she possesses an all-consuming passion for politics—both for the sausage-making of legislation and for the coffee klatches, parades, and speeches at union rallies. She was "on message" from day one, telling the *Lansing State-Journal* she was running because of the congressional Republicans' proposed Medicare reforms. "I really questioned whether they would go through with it. To me, it is just so extreme."

She's continued the Medicare attacks but downplays, and often ignores, her liberal principles. When asked at a September 16 debate with Chrysler what responsibility government had for welfare recipients whose benefits were set to expire, she talked about economic growth, college loans, child care, and transportation, but not about expanding the safety net. More broadly, her campaign stresses Clintonesque themes like "hard work, integrity, and a responsibility to give back" to the community, and highlights issues such as property-tax cuts, college loans for middle-class families, regulatory reform, tax cuts for small businesses, and more restrictive drunk-driving laws. This is not a liberal agenda.

Stabenow's transformation shows in the groups she looks to for guidance. Running for governor two years ago, she received support from liberal outfits like the National Organization for Women, Emily's List, and the National Women's Political Caucus. Today, she boasts of her membership in the centrist Democratic Leadership Council. (The DLC was founded after the 1984 presidential election defeat to rid the party of its liberal baggage and move it toward more moderate—that is, more popular—positions. Bill Clinton was a charter member.) And she says she supports much of the DLC's agenda: free trade, spending restraint, welfare reform, limited environmental regulation, middle-class tax relief, and reinventing government. William Ballenger, editor of the Lansing-based nonpartisan newsletter *Inside Michigan Politics*, says there's nothing new in this apparent contradiction. Stabenow "has always been able to package very liberal views in a velvet cocoon of centrism."

Indeed, there's little evidence Stabenow has experienced an ideological transformation. She's just doing, and saying, whatever will bolster her chances of getting elected. While she claims DLC membership, there's little in her lengthy political career indicating she ever wanted the Democratic party to become more centrist. *Inside Michigan Politics* gave her a 100 percent liberal rating for key votes in 1987 and a 97.5 percent rating for 1988. In 1993, her liberal rating dropped to 76.2 percent, but that still put her to the left of the average Democratic state senator. Among those who have campaigned for her this year are Rep. Joe Kennedy, former Texas governor Ann Richards, Health and Human Services secretary Donna Shalala, and aging folk stars Peter, Paul, and Mary—not exactly a moderate bunch.

In the end, the most remarkable thing about Stabenow's matchup with Chrysler is that for all of her attempts at moderation, she's ahead by just three points in the polls. That's the same margin as in June 1995, before she announced she was running and before the tide turned against the Republican Congress. It held steady even after Chrysler was the target

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of $2.7 million worth of advertising by labor unions and liberal interest groups charging that he voted "to cut Medicare, education and college loans, all to give a huge tax break to big corporations and the rich." Chrysler has begun to highlight Stabenow's liberal history, and in a district estimated to be 53 percent Republican, that'll keep the race close.

For Stabenow and others, running as a moderate makes perfect sense. Their spiritual guide, Bill Clinton, got elected on a relatively moderate platform in 1992, only to see his Democratic Congress go down in flames after he spent two years pursuing a liberal agenda. He then moved rightward for two years and saw the polls improve. That's good news for Clinton's reelection prospects and for his political protégés. But the dilemma for Stabenow and others who have posed as moderates is that in a Democratic Congress they would find themselves at the mercy of left-wing committee chairmen, much as Clinton did in 1993-94. His experience is a reminder that it's infinitely easier to campaign as a moderate Democrat than to govern as one. ♦

Pardon Me, Ms. Rodham

by Gary Schmitt

At the end of September, Bill Clinton told PBS's Jim Lehrer the following three things: First, he claimed special prosecutor Kenneth Starr was engaged in a partisan effort to "get" him and his wife; second, he practically accused Starr of suborning perjury; third, he refused to rule out giving presidential pardons to people convicted of crimes resulting from Starr's investigation.

Now, what would Hillary Rodham—that is, the Hillary Rodham of 1974, who worked on the House Judiciary Committee staff that drafted articles of impeachment against Richard Nixon—have said about all this? She might have said it was grounds for impeachment.

Consider the president's conduct during the Lehrer interview. Clinton went out of his way, after saying he had given the matter little thought, to describe the process by which pardons are granted. The Arkansas cases "should be handled like others," he said. It is clear what someone sitting in jail or contemplating the prospect might make of Clinton's statement: She would be led to believe that the idea of pardons for Clinton's Little Rock business and political associates *was* and *is* in play.

Whether Clinton intended to send such a message—and its corollary, that remaining silent before Starr, as Susan McDougal has done, might lead to a pardon—is impossible to know. But the fact that he made no immediate effort to "deny" that such was his intention or to have the White House "clarify" his remarks, even in the face of rather strong criticism from normally friendly corners like the editorial boards of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, only reinforces the suspicion.

Nor were Clinton's remarks all that unusual for him. In prior weeks, Clinton had raised in sporadic fashion the topic of pardons. And as early as midsummer, he was making statements that suggested to William Safire and others that Clinton was publicly signaling his staff that, if they hung tough and didn't cut a deal with investigators, he would see to it that they were taken care of.

By this point, it doesn't really matter whether Clinton's pardon talk is part of some insidious design. Under the Constitution, a president can be impeached if he is found to have engaged in "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors." It was the House Judiciary Committee that made the case back in 1974 that toying with the pardoning power falls within the category of "high crimes and misdemeanors."

"High crimes and misdemeanors," according to a Judiciary Committee staff report, are not limited to presidential violations of the criminal code. The phrase denotes behavior that, even if technically within the letter of the law, acts to "subvert the structure of government, or undermine the integrity of the office." Clearly, a president who dangles a pardon or fiscal assistance in front of people who might have information damaging to him personally is using the power of his office to circumvent legal processes already underway.

The president, the committee staff said, has an "affirmative" constitutional responsibility to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." It doesn't matter that the law establishing the special-prosecutor process is probably bad law; it is still the law and it is Clinton's duty to see that it is carried out, not undermined. Nor does it matter that, under the Constitution, there is nothing preventing Clinton from issuing pardons to whomever he pleases. The one abiding principle is this: A president cannot use a legitimate power for an illegitimate end.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the final analysis, "determining whether grounds for impeachment exist," the House staff argued, is "derived from understanding the nature, functions and duties of the office" of the official being impeached. Did Hillary Rodham help write those words? I don't know, but she certainly believed, as the committee staff did, that dangling pardons may not make a president a crook but could be an impeachable offense nonetheless. Does she still believe the same thing, now that the president is no longer Richard Nixon and her own name is Hillary Rodham Clinton?

Gary Schmitt is writing a book on executive power and the Founders.

An Entitlement Is Born

by David Frum

How panicked is the Republican retreat? This panicked: On Sept. 25, the Republican Congress—remember, the one filled with extremists—voted to create what will likely prove the biggest and costliest new entitlement program since Congress enacted Supplemental Security Income in 1972.

The new entitlement serves an almost irresistibly sympathetic cause: crippled children of Vietnam veterans. Proponents promised that the new entitlement's cost would be modest, perhaps a billion dollars at most. To a Republican Congress determined to prove its compassion before hitting the hustings, it must have seemed suicidal to say no.

They ought to have read the fine print. SSI was also a modest program at the beginning, a small supplement to the pensions of the poorest and most disabled elderly. It quickly metastasized; the cost of SSI in 1997 will be $30 billion. Most of that money, 60 percent of all the new SSI pensions granted in 1993, goes to an unanticipated group of recipients: disturbed, disabled, and drug-addicted young people. Along the way, SSI has earned a reputation as perhaps the most fraud-plagued transfer program in Washington. There is every reason to think that this new entitlement will follow the same sorry course.

The Agent Orange Benefits Act of 1996, to give the new entitlement its full name, assumes responsibility for the surgical and rehabilitation expenses of Vietnam veterans whose children were or will be born with spina bifida. Spina bifida is a particularly gruesome affliction, a failure of a baby's spine to join properly in the womb. It can cause paralysis, brain damage, and the loss of control of bowel and bladder. In the past, spina bifida was usually fatal; it's now often possible to save the child's life, but the cost of the necessary surgery can easily exceed $250,000. Lifelong nursing care for the most severe cases can cost much more.

Until now, the cost of caring for spina bifida babies has been largely borne by insurers, state Medicaid programs, and charities, notably the Shriners. Democratic congressmen, led by Lane Evans of Illinois in the House and minority leader Tom Daschle in the Senate, decided that it was time for the Department of Veterans Affairs to begin picking up much of the tab. They argued that Vietnam veterans are fathering an above-the-norm number of spina bifida babies, and they blamed the much criticized herbicide used to defoliate jungle in the Vietnam War, Agent Orange. "These children were just as wounded by the war in Vietnam as their fathers," Evans declared in March. He estimates that as many as 3,000 veterans' children have or will be born with spina bifida.

Proponents of the new benefit are undaunted that the scientific case against Agent Orange is flimsy to the point of wispiness. In 1991, Congress directed the National Academy of Sciences to sponsor studies to investigate the connection between Agent Orange and spina bifida. Two years later the Academy reported: It deemed the evidence for the correlation "inadequate" and "insufficient." That ought to have been good news for veterans exposed to Agent Orange. But it was very bad news indeed for their would-be congressional champions. So the Academy was sent back to work. Earlier this year, it produced a new report, upgrading its description of the correlation from "inadequate" and "insufficient" to "limited" and "suggestive." That "limited" link is even weaker than it sounds: It is based on a new study that the study's own author warned was inconclusive and uncertain.

Conscientiously, the National Academy of Sciences festooned its 1996 Agent Orange update with warnings against premature conclusions. The new spina bifida evidence, the academy cautioned, "suffer[s] from methodologic limitations, including possible recall bias, nonresponse bias, small sample size, and misclassification of exposure." Nor is the academy yet convinced that Agent Orange was all that dangerous in the first place: "The toxicity of the herbicides used in Vietnam remains poorly studied." Nor can it say how many or how few Vietnam veterans were exposed to herbicides, or in what quantities: "The definition and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quantification of exposure are the weakest methodologic aspects of the epidemiologic studies."

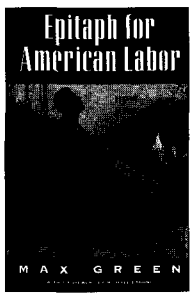
Oh well, one might shrug: Congress has written many billion-dollar checks on weaker rationales than that. And the families that have given birth to spina bifida babies unquestionably need the help, even if Agent Orange turns out to be a hoax. Why begrudge the billion?

Unfortunately, the ultimate cost of this generosity to veterans with spina bifida babies will almost certainly prove vastly, vastly greater than a single billion. For the real issue here is that Congress has for the very first time made veterans' health-care benefits available to the *children* of former soldiers. A precedent with huge implications has been set. Evans understands that. In his March statement he went on to declare, "The connection of Agent Orange to Spina Bifida only raises troubling questions as to if there are any other medical problems that children of Vietnam Veterans may have inherited." Who can doubt, in a country ready to panic over breast implants and other unproven threats, those problems will be found?

And why should only Vietnam veterans be indemnified against their children's sickness? There were chemicals in the air in the Persian Gulf, and chemicals will undoubtedly be used or encountered in America's future wars. Future veterans will expect equal treatment. And why only medical problems? Congress last week voted a package of health-care legislation that requires employers to offer benefits for mental as well as physical illness. Surely veterans deserve the same standard of care. Which heartless Republican congressman will deny that Junior's "attention deficit disorder" might be traceable to Dad's "post-traumatic stress disorder"?

It used to be expected that as the number of World War II veterans shrank, so too would the cost and functions of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Thirteen million men and women wore the uniform of the United States in 1945; only about 1.5 million will do so at century's end. Theoretically, the Veterans Affairs apparat of 2046 should require only about one-ninth the budget of today. But canny Veterans Affairs administrators are one step ahead of us: If their department runs out of veterans to take care of, it will settle for the children of veterans.

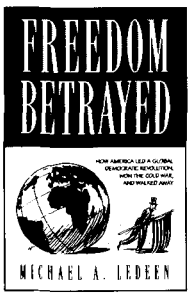
ELECTION '96 READING



EPITAPH FOR AMERICAN LABOR
How Union Leaders Lost Touch with America

By Max Green

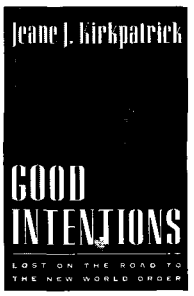
1996, 187 pages
ISBN 0-8447-3996-0
$24.95 cloth



FREEDOM BETRAYED
How America Led a Global Democratic Revolution, Won the Cold War, and Walked Away

By Michael A. Ledeen

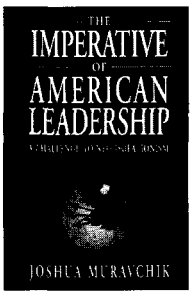
1996, 175 pages
ISBN 0-8447-3992-8
$24.95 cloth



GOOD INTENTIONS
Lost on the Road to the New World Order

By Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

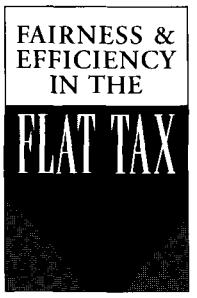
Forthcoming in 1996
200 pages
ISBN 0-8447-3990-1
$24.95



THE IMPERATIVE OF AMERICAN LEADERSHIP
A Challenge to Neo-Isolationism

By Joshua Muravchik

1996, 273 pages
ISBN 0-8447-3958-8
$24.95 cloth



FAIRNESS AND EFFICIENCY IN THE FLAT TAX

By Robert E. Hall, Alvin Rabushka, Dick Armey, Robert Eisner, and Herbert Stein

1996, 133 pages
ISBN 0-8447-3987-1
$12.95 paper

AEI
THE AEI PRESS AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES OR CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-269-6267

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This may sound alarmist, but it is almost impossible to be alarmist about the growth of federal entitlement programs. In the mid-1960s, Medicare was projected to cost about $10 billion annually by the time it was up and running; adjusting for inflation, it costs five times that sum, and will probably cost six times as much in 2001. Medicare and SSI have even more dramatically outpaced expectations. A very, very bad precedent was set with the Agent Orange bill; a precedent whose ultimate costs will be measured in the tens of billions of dollars. It is a sad final legacy of a Congress that began with such bright hopes. ♦

PULITZER BAIT IN PHILLY

by Christopher Caldwell

TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S best-known journalists embark on a two-and-a-half-year economics investigation that results in an article so long it has to be divided into ten parts. Their cash-strapped newspaper pours half a million dollars into an advertising campaign, and a leading publisher plans a book version with an initial printing that could reach 125,000. Dozens of papers beg—and bid—for syndication rights. And when it finally appears, it becomes an object of such derision in the mainstream press that just about the only person with anything nice to say about it is vagabond vice-presidential candidate Pat Choate.

Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele's "America: Who Stole the Dream?" ran in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* from September 8 to September 22. It is the long-awaited sequel to the authors' 1991 "America: What Went Wrong?" an invective-driven exposé of economic decline. The earlier work was a seamless tale of how a faulty "government rulebook" had led to all the economic ills of the 1980s, that wretched decade, including mergers, junk bonds, yuppies, layoffs, and free trade. It was reviled in certain corners. Paul Keegan of *Philadelphia* magazine called it "an unbearably long, turgid, mind-numbing torrent of repetitive facts, numbers and anecdotes . . . so fundamentally flawed, its intellectual underpinnings so weak, that it actually says little about what went wrong with America, and everything about what went wrong with Barlett and Steele." Nonetheless, appearing at the pit of the Bush recession, it proved the most successful "enterprise" feature in the history of a paper known for such features. It drew the praise of scores of journalists and left-wing economists, and sold 500,000 copies when it was published in book form by Andrews & McMeel.

According to the authors, it was the sections on the global economy that most piqued the readership. Hence "Who Stole the Dream?"

The new series makes a similarly seamless argument that all of our ills are attributable to the global economy. Its indictment comes down to this: Government's failure to enact tariffs, control immigration, and protect manufacturing industries amounts to a "betrayal" of the "middle class" and an end to American upward mobility. It is a series with self-evident flaws, most of them shared with its predecessor. Foremost is its schizophrenia: It's half government statistics, half interviews with the downtrodden, and the link between the two is tenuous. Nor does the series make the slightest feint at finding an upside to an economy converting from manufacturing to service jobs. It explicitly and proudly ignores the service economy, on the grounds that the service economy doesn't produce "good jobs" or provide the backbone for a strong defense.

"Who Stole the Dream?" takes on faith the connection between a trade deficit and high unemployment (a relationship that appears not to be borne out in any country in the developed world). It has a confused standard for judging what is high-tech and what is not. And it is given to the authors' let's-pretend-this-salt-shaker-is-the-Third-Armored-Division oversimplifications. "If the minimum wage had risen at the same rate [as the trade deficit]," they explain in one much-mocked passage, "a beginning hamburger flipper at McDonald's would earn $129 an hour."

Not much difference between it and "America: What Went Wrong?" But this time, without an economic crisis and an unpopular Republican administration, journalists were less restrained in their criticism. *Newsweek*'s Robert Samuelson called it "junk journalism." The *Wall Street Journal*'s Holman Jenkins, Jr. called it a "flotsam of barnacled dogma." Most embarrassingly, the *Seattle Times*, which had made plans to syndicate the entire series, pulled it after the first column. As the paper's executive editor Michael Fancher explained, "The premise was sweeping and provocative. It was also unsubstantiated, in the eyes of editors at the *Seattle Times*."

Worse than any of this is that the brass at the *Inquirer* itself doesn't believe in the series. While no one will say so on the record, many people at the paper think it stinks. Op-ed-page associate editor Mike Leary, asked about the spate of editorials and columns

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(including Samuelson's) the *Inquirer* ran *against* the series, won't come down on either side. "I'm a great admirer of Barlett and Steele. They have a superb record in journalism. They care about what they're doing. That's what they wrote and those are their conclusions. I have a different job, to encourage debate." A good number of the op-eds written in response to the series, including two by editorial page editor Jane Eisner, praised its mission but conspicuously refrained from an out-and-out endorsement. Nor was there any endorsement in the editorial columns; a bloc on the editorial board considered the series an embarrassment. Even those who have a high regard for Barlett and Steele dismiss it as the same old song and dance, nothing more than a rehash of their previous work. "It's Don and Jim's greatest hits," says an editor.

It's this lack of faith that provides the gravamen of the case against the *Inquirer*, and against Barlett and Steele: that they ran with a poor article they didn't believe in, in order to pander to a Pulitzer prize committee that awards its honors on an increasingly formulaic basis.

The stakes are high for the *Inquirer*, where circulation has been headed steadily downward in the last five years. The paper has an acclaimed recent history, much of it centered around the Pulitzer prize. Under Eugene Roberts, who became its executive editor in 1972, the *Inquirer* won its first Pulitzer ever in 1975—for a Barlett and Steele feature on how the IRS trained its auditing guns on smaller taxpayers. (The pair won another Pulitzer in 1989, for yet another IRS exposé.) By 1991, when Roberts left, the paper had won a total of 17 Pulitzers, many for the kind of Cecil B. DeMille-like multi-year, multi-part enterprise pieces in which Barlett and Steele specialize. It hasn't won one since.

Now, few people accused the *Inquirer* of pandering for Pulitzers back when they were getting some; it's rather like sexual harassment, under whose draconian rules the only sexual advances ever reported are "*unwanted* sexual advances." But since Barlett and Steele won their last Pulitzer seven years ago, the *Inquirer* has seen its reputation for everything except political correctness drastically reduced, while dozens of its top journalists have fled.

"Much like the *Washington Post* after Watergate," one editor opines, "the *Inquirer* is in a state of detumescence." When Roberts departed, two things went immediately awry. First, his loyal if aging staff of reporters had grown dependent on him for assignments and inspiration, and found themselves adrift. Second, and more important, Roberts had been a forceful (and resourceful) arguer with Knight-Ridder, the *Inquirer*'s notoriously frugal Miami-based parent company. Unsatisfied with the *Inquirer*'s single-digit profit margin, Knight-Ridder was constantly pressuring the paper to shrink its news hole and rein in its editorial expenses. Once Roberts was gone, the wall against corporate interference collapsed. Reporting travel was cut back, phone calls monitored, and reporters suddenly found themselves dealing with markedly fewer resources.

When Roberts went to the *New York Times* in 1994, the *Inquirer*, which had already been losing talent to the *Times* since the year before, began to hemorrhage it. *Times*-ward departures in recent years are well into double digits: Federal court correspondent Tim Weiner moved to the *Times* to cover the CIA. State political writer Kit Seelye went there to cover Congress. The *Inquirer* lost sportswriter Jere Longman, metro reporter Pam Belluck, city hall reporter Matt Purdy, and book critic Doreen Carvajal. Atlantic City correspondent David Cay Johnston went to cover the IRS. That's a partial list and doesn't include the dozens of writers who have moved to other papers. In all, 9 of the paper's 17 Pulitzer winners have left.

What's more, this was at the point when political correctness was infecting the *Inquirer* with a vengeance. The paper took a wishy-washy stance on the disciplining of a University of Pennsylvania student who had called a black carouser a "water buffalo," ran an apology for an editorial urging that use of the Norplant contraceptive be part of future welfare-reform packages, and (more recently) demanded that a "balancing" review be run when the paper's regularly assigned review of Dinesh D'Souza's *The End of Racism* came in positive.

What's more, Roberts's successor Maxwell King announced a "quota" system under which, for the foreseeable future, half the *Inquirer*'s new hires would be women and half minorities. Whether because of the quota system or not, the paper's most ambitious young reporters were increasingly disinclined to stay there. The final embarrassment came last spring, when two young reporters who had recently left the *Inquirer*'s "correspondent" (or internship) program—Joby Warrick of the *Raleigh News and Observer* and David Rohde of the *Christian Science Monitor*—won Pulitzers for public service and foreign correspondence respectively.

Barlett and Steele are the only heavy-hitting reporters left from the paper's heyday. Barlett, 60, and Steele, 53, claim to have no politics, but there is a constant thread of populist anger at the powers-that-be that has run through all their articles, even since before they began working on economics. Given the strong industrial-laborite bias of their last two series, it's not surprising that Steele worked for two years as a flack in the Washington offices of the Laborers' International Union. The two started at the *Inquirer* on the same day in 1970 and the following year teamed on a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

series on federal mortgage programs. They have since collaborated on dozens of articles and five books, and have such a close working relationship that their writing styles have become indistinguishable. They spend almost no time together, each reporting and writing his own sections (in isolation) and editing the other's. They almost never socialize, and their wives have not met.

Not surprisingly, Barlett and Steele's blockbuster series were looked upon as magic bullets. One Pulitzer committee juror describes Roberts as the "Marlin Perkins of Pulitzer fishing" and Barlett and Steele as his archetypal writers. "Roberts is the master of producing these preposterous series," the juror says. "Among people who hand out Pulitzer prizes, it's all 'This must be high-quality stuff' and 'Barlett and Steele have awakened the people to the underside of American capitalism' and blah-blah-blah."

James B. Steele and Donald L. Barlett

Kevin Chadwick

Having commissioned the series, the *Inquirer* sought to stoke interest in it, with a multimedia advertising blitz that cost them just under $500,000, according to *Inquirer* public relations director Charles Fancher. The series fell short of the success of "America: What Went Wrong?"—4,000 phone calls to the paper, according to Barlett, versus 20,000 for the earlier series. Not surprising, since those most subject to the depredations it describes tend not to read the *Inquirer*, only 19 percent of whose subscribers are blue-collar, according to the paper's own market research. But Barlett and Steele say the mail and calls were running two to one in favor of the series, while deputy editor Gene Foreman says the paper's Philadelphia Online service registered an unusually high number of hits on the days the series ran. It also gave the paper a circulation bump—about 30,000 readers on the Sundays it appeared, according to Foreman. (The biggest regular bump the *Inquirer* gets comes when the Eagles win, which pushes Monday sales up 10,000.)

The authors deny tailoring their work to the Pulitzer genre, and neither thinks the series is Pulitzer material anyway. "This thing doesn't have a chance in the world," says Steele. "This one wouldn't stand a prayer of a Pulitzer," says Barlett. "Very little truly controversial work has ever won the Pulitzer."

Their appraisal is right but their reasoning wrong. The problem is not that their work is controversial but that it's economically unsound. The article you hold in your hand is not the first to comment on both writers' eerie capacity for economic non sequiturs. Take Barlett, when confronted with recent poll numbers showing that by a margin of 52-22, Americans are happy about the direction the country is going in, and don't think of the "dream" as having been "stolen." "Tuesday the government released its housing sales report," says Barlett. "Housing sales are running at a record level, 800,000 annually. But bankruptcies are running at a million. So that good news is sometimes not what it's cracked up to be."

Or take Steele, discussing the pair's earlier series "America: What Went Wrong?" "We really focused more on taxes," Steele says. "Some people said, 'You're ignoring the fact that the rich pay more taxes than they ever have before.' Well, as a group that's true. But individually they don't." If the rich are shrinking into an oligarchy, how can that be true?

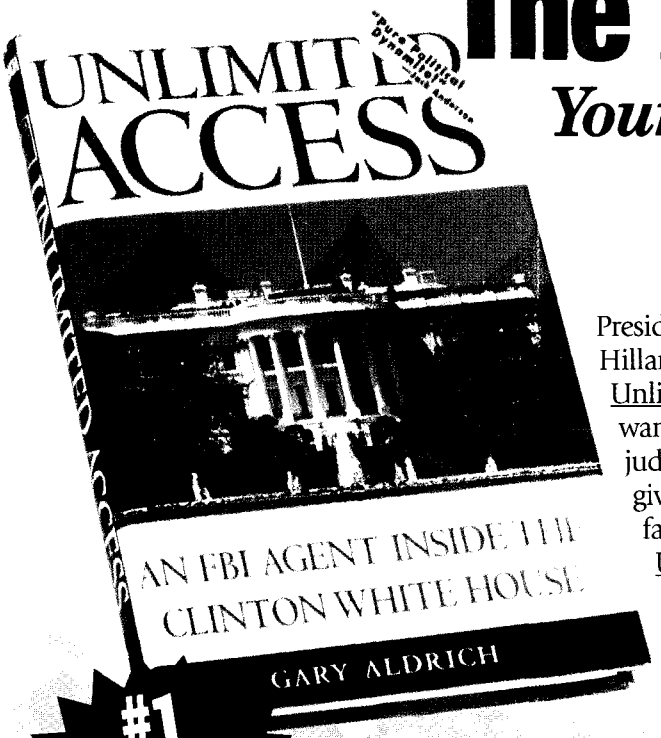
The predicament Barlett and Steele are in is not wholly their fault. One is reminded of a 17-year-old sports phenom or starlet getting fleeced by her agent. Barlett and Steele are solid journalists, biased perhaps, but skilled at researching in government documents and willing to do the hard legwork of interviewing. They have certainly done Pulitzer-caliber work in the past. Unfortunately, their increasingly desperate employers have allowed to them drift far from their area of competence and expertise, so they've wound up, willy-nilly, carrying water for the pundits of economic catastrophe.

The desperate Max King has tried to parry criticism by claiming Barlett and Steele are practicing a new type of journalism. "Conclusive journalism," he calls it, although King has not been able to define it on the record, despite several tries. While King, on vacation, could not be reached to give it one more stab, none of the editors working under him has the foggiest idea what it means. Nor does Barlett or Steele. What it *seems* to mean is walking down to the waterfront, seeing that the ocean is two feet higher than it was an hour ago, and "concluding" that everyone in the country is eventually going to drown. Which is a fair conclusion to draw if you don't know anything about tides. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Book the Clinton

*Yours **FREE** When You Become a*



#1 On The New York Times & The Wall Street Journal Best Sellers List!

Plus, take 2 books of your choice for just $1 each!

President Clinton's midnight trysts...A room full of FBI files...Queen Hillary...Vince Foster's mysteriously over-looked computer. It's all here in Unlimited Access, the explosive bestseller the Clintons absolutely don't want you to read -- but the Conservative Book Club thinks you should judge for yourself! Only Membership in the Conservative Book Club gives you the inside track on what's happening in Washington at prices far below retail. And only the CBC brings you blockbusters like Unlimited Access. *Join today...because this is one book -- and one book club -- you can't afford to miss!*

Nixon, A Life

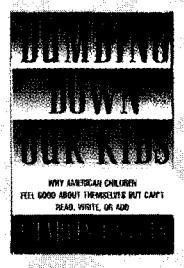
This definitive biography is packed with insights about the rise, fall, and rebirth of one of the most complex figures in history.

#4024 Retail Price $28.00

Right From The Beginning

This is Pat Buchanan at his best! Often comic, always captivating, the autobiographical Right From The Beginning provides a poignant look at growing up Catholic, conservative, and rambunctious in 1950s Washington D.C.!

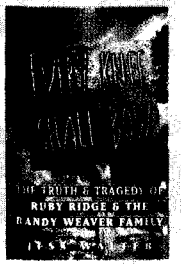
#3000 Retail Price $14.95



Dumbing Down Our Kids

Dumbing Down Our Kids gets to the heart of the problem with America's educational system. Charlie Sykes contends it's not society, family or television, but the schools themselves!

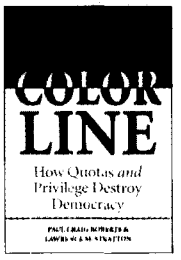
#4276 Retail Price $23.95



Every Knee Shall Bow

It was one of the biggest law enforcement debacles in the history of our country. This is Randy Weaver's compelling story -- from his childhood in Iowa to the famed shootout on Ruby Ridge that left his 14 year old son, and his wife Vicki dead. Contains photographs, some of them never seen before!

#4278 Retail Price $24.00



The New Color Line

Americans who overwhelmingly supported the Civil Rights Act thirty years ago are now opposed to what the law has become -- race and gender privileges. In The New Color Line, authors Paul Craig Roberts and Lawrence M. Stratton discuss how our society is in the process of being unraveled by racial quotas.

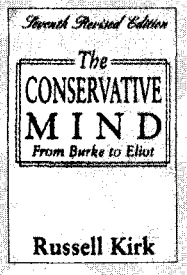
#4243 Retail Price $24.95

The Conservative Mind

New Edition of the best-selling book that gave voice to the modern American conservative movement. "The most important book of the century."

– Whittaker Chambers

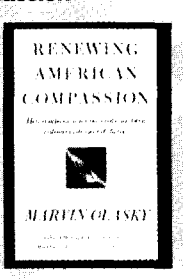
#4292 Retail Price $24.95



Renewing American Compassion

In a ringing call to churches, community leaders, and ordinary citizens, Marvin Olasky offers specific guidelines for lending a helping hand to the needy, and discusses how true compassion not only renews all of us, but also helps to enrich and revitalize our entire society.

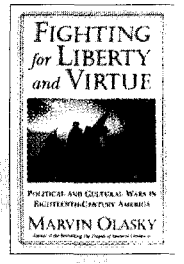
#4345 Retail Price $21.00

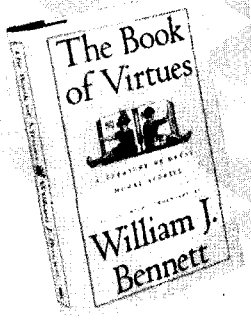


Fighting for Liberty and Virtue

Acclaimed author Marvin Olasky has extracted the forgotten wisdom of men such as Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams on many of the issues that divide our country, like term limits, balanced budgets, federal vs. state power!

#4364 Retail Price $24.95

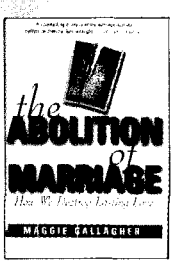




The Book of Virtues

In a time where smut, violence, and immorality pervade the media, this inspiring collection of fables, poetry, stories, and other readings is a lesson in morality, and a must read for our nation's families! This #1 bestseller by Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education will provide a solid foundation of morality for you and your children!

#3884 Retail Price $30.00



The Abolition of Marriage

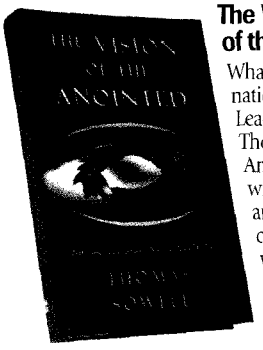
Marriage is no longer the norm and the effect that the new social rules are having on our society are devastating. Combining real life accounts, and solid facts, author Maggie Gallagher shows how society now punishes commitment and rewards selfishness and irresponsibility.

#4299 Retail Price $24.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

White House Wants to Ban

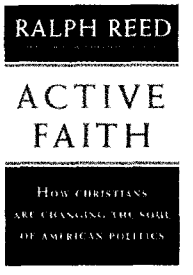
Conservative Book Club Member Today



The Vision of the Anointed

What are the consequences of a nation coerced into a mind set? Leading black conservative Thomas Sowell explains how America was brainwashed with the myth that liberals are always right and conservatives are always wrong.

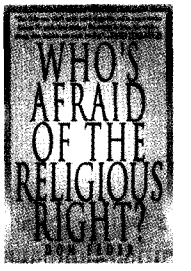
#4215
Retail Price $25.00



Active Faith

Where did the religious conservative movement come from? How did it arise as such an effective political force? Ralph Reed, author and Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, articulates the Coalition's political vision.

#4335 Retail Price $25.00



Who's Afraid Of The Religious Right?

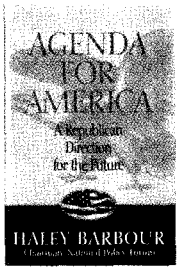
In this clear and incisive book, Jewish author and noted Boston Herald columnist, Don Feder, not only defends the agenda of the Christian right, but also identifies the real extremists -- the anti-religious, amoral elites.

#4349 Retail Price $24.95

Agenda For America

At last! A book that proclaims the Republican vision for a renewed America. Similar in scope to the House's "Contract With America," Agenda For America concentrates on fresh ideas, new policies, and challenges for the future.

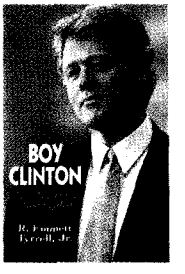
#4340 Retail Price $24.95



Boy Clinton

Blockbuster expose by the publisher of *American Spectator*. R. Emmett Tyrell has unearthed the truth about the real Bill Clinton . . . including facts that have never been revealed before.

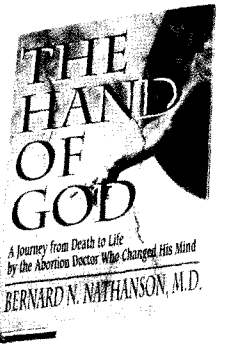
#4367 Retail Price $24.95

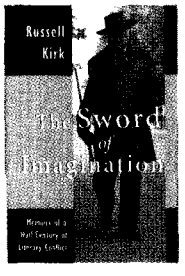


The Hand of God

Doctor Bernard N. Nathanson presided over 60,000 abortions as director of the world's largest abortion clinic. This stirring autobiography explores what it is like to abort a child, and how a lifelong atheist converted to the pro-life cause.

#4324 $24.95 Value





The Sword of Imagination

It is hard to find a more significant contributor to the world of conservatism than Russell Kirk. This autobiography is a great achievement that leaves the reader torn between admiration, and awe. "An astounding and triumphant life."
– William Rusher

#4227 Retail Price $34.99

To Renew America

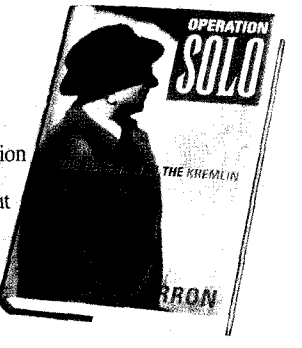
Newt Gingrich reveals common sense solutions to the issues we care about most ... welfare, balancing the budget, and shifting power from the bureaucracy to the citizenry.

#4257 Retail Price $24.00

Operation Solo

An amazing story of the most dangerous secret agent deception of all time! "A stunning and compelling story...Barron's taut descriptions... are riveting."

#4296
Retail Price $24.95



Get the Blockbuster Unlimited Access

plus FREE! 2 Books for $1 each

Benefits of Membership and How the Book Club Works

INSTANT SAVINGS! Join today and get any 2 of the books pictured in this ad for just $1 each ($2.00 total) and a free copy of Unlimited Access, plus shipping and handling. Then take up to two years to buy four more books at regular low Club prices (20-50% below retail.) After you have paid for your books, your Membership can be ended by you or the Club. Plus you will also get opportunities to buy from our list of Superbargain books that the Club regularly offers. These books are offered at 70-90% discounts!! (Sorry, Superbargain books don't count toward your book commitment.)

FREE BULLETIN! At least 13 times a year you will receive the Club Bulletin packed with the kind of books you will want to read and own. Each bulletin will describe a Featured Selection chosen just for our Members. Also included are a number of alternate selections about politics, religion, history, home schooling, investing and other areas of interest to conservatives.

SHOP AT HOME CONVENIENCE! When you receive your Bulletin you will have the chance to examine the many books of interest and read reviews for each. If you want to receive the Featured Selection, do nothing and it will be sent to you. If you don't want the Featured Selection or you would like an alternate selection, simply indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it before the deadline date. CBC is an easy way to build your conservative library from the comfort of your own home.

100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED! If you are not completely satisfied with any book, return it and receive a complete credit. Plus you will always have at least ten days to make your decision to receive the Featured Selection. If you ever have less than ten days, you simply return the book at Club expense for a full credit. One Membership per household please.

☐ **YES!** Please enroll me as a Preferred Member of the Conservative Book Club under the terms outlined in this ad. Send me Unlimited Access FREE plus the 2 books I've indicated and bill me just $2.00 total, plus shipping and handling. I agree to buy just four more books at regularly discounted club member prices over the next two years.

Please write book numbers here: # _____ # _____ C0040-A-Z

Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Prices slightly higher in Canada. Orders subject to approval by Conservative Book Club.

Send No Money Now!

Fill out this coupon and mail to: **CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB**
33 Oakland Ave., Harrison, NY 10528

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FOCUS-GROUP FRAUD

By Andrew Ferguson

It was one of the two or three oddest developments of the presidential campaign, if anyone is still keeping track. Suddenly, sometime around mid-April, Bob Dole uncorked a new bit of rhetoric. "If something happened along the way," Dole announced at a campaign rally, "and you had to leave your children with Bob Dole or Bill Clinton, I think you'd probably leave your children with Bob Dole."

The infelicity of the candidate's thought experiment was immediately apparent. In the upbeat atmosphere of a campaign rally, with perky cheerleaders and brass bands poised to go giddy on cue, it's usually considered unwise to muse aloud to parents in the audience about what would happen if *they croaked* and *their kids were left alone in the world. . . .*

Dole was asked to explain his reasoning in a TV interview. "It's what a couple of people have told me who had focus groups," he replied. Was he impugning the president's character? "I'm just repeating what focus groups said—liberals, men, women, Democrats, Republicans, conservatives." Did it mean that Clinton's not a good person? "You'd have to ask the people in the focus groups," he replied. "I wasn't in the focus groups. But I think it indicates that people trust Bob Dole."

Actually, it doesn't. It indicates that those people in those focus groups who said they would leave their kids with Bob Dole probably do trust Bob Dole. And that's all it indicates. It tells us nothing about the public at large. Indeed, before you could say "Gotcha!" the *Washington Post* commissioned a poll showing that 52 percent of Americans would prefer Clinton as foster Dad; only 27 percent chose Dole.

But why be pedantic? There's no reason to pick on Dole alone. He was making a common error, another symptom of the latest disease to afflict the world of politics: focus-group hysteria. "They're the hottest research mechanism going right now," says Mark Mellman, a Democratic consultant. "We've done more focus groups in the last month than we did in the entire 1986 election cycle. People think they're extremely fashionable and sexy."

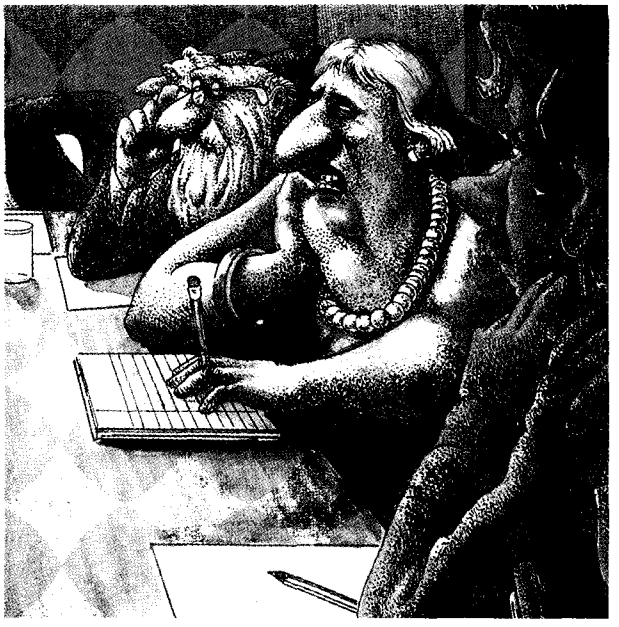
As recently as twenty years ago, focus groups were an obscure technique used by researchers in the field of retail marketing. A group of ten to fifteen consumers sharing some characteristic—middle-aged housewives, teenage girls with disposable income, suburban men with young children—might be selected through a phone survey and brought together to taste a new breakfast cereal, compare proposed ad campaigns, or judge the new logo for a box of Goobers. Their responses are solicited by a moderator and recorded on video or audio tape. Sessions last as long as two hours, after which the lucky participants will be paid $40 or $50 for their time. In the end the client has a more complete understanding of the tastes and preferences of his potential consumers.

The result is called qualitative research, to distinguish it from quantitative research, which refers to the raw data gleaned from more conventional public-opinion polling. Polls draw on a large, randomly selected group of respondents, who, according to probability theory, will present a statistically accurate picture of the public as a whole. Polls are useful, indeed indis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pensable, for a market researcher, but they have their limitations. If you're about to come out with a new cereal—say, chocolate soyflakes (yuk)—it would be too expensive to gather a randomly selected group of a thousand cereal eaters in a single place and force-feed them your bad idea. But you can, with relative ease and little expense, bring a focus group around a table to gauge their reactions to chocolate soyflakes. And when they all reach as one for the air-sickness bags, you'll know you should probably stick with Fruit Loops.

No product is brought to market these days without extensive focus-group testing; moviemakers have even been known to reshoot the endings of their movies when focus groups have found the originals unappealing. (In the most famous example, Glenn Close's character committed suicide in the original climax of *Fatal Attraction*. When focus groups objected, the ending was reshot so Michael Douglas's wife could kill her. But everyone agreed, then as now, that Glenn Close is annoying.) TV news anchors are often chosen or dumped based on focus-group research. And no one doubts the usefulness of focus groups in the testing of consumer products. But their utility in political campaigns is more controversial.



Focus groups have been widely used in politics for only fifteen years or so. Once an instrument of national campaigns exclusively, they have become popular at every level of electioneering in the 1990s. Consultants will field a focus group for a variety of purposes. They can show campaign ads to test their effect. Pollsters, before conducting a survey, might use a focus group to test ideas about what to ask and how to ask it. After the survey, a pollster can use a focus-group discussion to probe confusing or contradictory results.

So what's the problem? Focus groups, wrote the political analyst Stuart Rothenberg in a recent *Roll Call*, "are the most misused and fraudulent political technique of the decade." Rothenberg's complaint is that in all this flurry of activity candidates and consultants forget that focus-group results are not "projectable" onto the larger population. Polls are scientifically designed to apprehend public opinion; the results, within a margin of error, do tell you something about the thinking of voters at large. Not so with focus groups. The groups are too small. There's no way of knowing that they represent anything more than the opinions of twelve people sitting in a room talking to a moderator in anticipation of making forty bucks.

This was Bob Dole's error in confidently volunteering to adopt America's children. And it is an increasingly common mistake. It is now routine for newspaper reporters to build entire stories around the projectability fallacy. Recently—to take an example almost at random—the *New York Times* sent a reporter to trail Bob Dole through the Midwest. The reporter talked to voters. And announced: "Mr. Dole's effort to [explain his tax cut] has yielded more frustration than votes." Quotes from real live people were included to obscure the article's only indisputable fact, which was that the reporter had made a judgment about public opinion at large on the basis of a relatively small number of interviews. Bogus though it was, the story served its purpose of misleading the paper's readers.

Even some political consultants—even some political consultants who themselves use focus groups—have grown uneasy with the technique, and their objections run deeper than the simple issue of projectability. "Focus groups are great for finding out what's on the top of people's minds," says Sean Fitzpatrick, an ad man who worked for George Bush in 1992—and who resigned in part from frustration with the campaign's obsession with focus groups. "You can observe how people immediately react to a particular product, for example.

"But they are dangerous, even destructive, when you're using them to make judgments for you, particularly on matters they haven't thought very much about. In politics people often don't know what they think. But you're asking them to be instant experts. And once they're in that role of expert, they're no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

longer useful to you. They're no longer reacting as normal voters."

Unlike polls, which have statistical safeguards, a focus group can't be replicated. Ditto the "data" it yields. The response a person gives to an advertisement shown in a focus group might be quite different from his more passive, less thoughtful reaction when he sees the same ad while slumped in his Barcalounger at home. In the artificial setting of a focus group, he can be steered one way or another by the moderator, or by his fellow respondents. He may be inhibited by their reactions to his reactions. All these elements of group dynamics make the conclusions drawn from focus groups highly suspect.

But in politics today they do not seem to be treated with the suspicion they deserve. "In my experience," says Mike Murphy, a Republican political consultant, "the campaigns that have done the most focus groups have all lost. They're a symptom of a weak campaign—a substitute for leadership, for devising a strategy and sticking to it. The theory behind focus groups is, if you don't have a strategy, let's throw a bunch of people in a room and have them tell us what to do."

Even an outsider can tell when a campaign is relying overmuch on focus-group research. You just have to know what to look for. If a candidate flits from issue to issue, hammering tax cuts one week, then drugs the next, then crime the next, if he frames his opponent as wishy-washy one day and a committed liberal ideologue the morning after—does any of this sound familiar?—he is probably taking his cues from focus groups. And President Clinton is thought by many in the industry to be the most focus-group-obsessed politician in history. During the budget crisis of late '95, the administration was reportedly doing one focus group a night. His speeches, with their famously stuffed sentences ("we will strengthen our families, protect our environment, care for the elderly, keep our streets safe"), sound like a focus-group transcript distilled to its essence.

It's easy to account for the popularity of focus groups in politics. They suit the special demands of candidate and consultant alike. Though not at all scientific, they offer the veneer of pseudo-science. A consultant who specializes in qualitative research can plausibly claim for himself near-mystical powers of intuition and populist divination; he becomes as Svengali, the private role model of all political consultants. At the end of the process the candidate receives easy-to-read reports peppered with illustrative quotes and anecdotes from real human beings, plus lots of phrases tested for use in speeches. Even better, focus groups cost less than polls while yielding lots of poll-like data. And perhaps best of all, they offer the candidate instant gratification. Most focus groups are held in offices designed for the purpose, with a two-way mirror on one wall. A candidate has the voyeuristic pleasure of watching those real human beings discuss him and his issues from behind the glass. This is not always for the best. Frank Rizzo, the former mayor of Philadelphia, once tried to lunge through the glass at a woman who had dismissed his candidacy with an ethnic epithet.

One charge in the general indictment of focus groups doesn't stand up. Focus groups, Rothenberg wrote in *Roll Call*, "also are popular because the profit margin . . . is so high for pollsters—reportedly more than double that for quantitative studies." In fact, profit margins are low. A focus group will cost you between $5,000 and $6,000; a poll begins at $12,000. But a consultant will have to eat more than half his price in expenses—hiring a firm to canvass and cull the participants, paying them off with their $50, renting the room, and so on. Most focus groups are held in far-flung places, so there's travel, too. But one truth will strike anyone who watches a focus group in action: No matter how much a moderator is getting paid for his services, it's not enough.

A focus-group veteran once said to me: "You sit in enough of these things, and the sad truth is, you end up really despising people as a class."

I myself am not a veteran, having had only two focus-group experiences. Journalists aren't usually admitted to political focus groups, especially in a campaign season, since the information derived from them, while mostly worthless, is deemed sensitive and proprietary. But I've watched one on videotape and attended another, and I've begun to see the veteran's point.

The videotaped focus group was more typical in technique. It was held last spring in Macomb County, Mich. As a key swing district in national elections, the original home of the Reagan Democrat and other beasts of political mythology, Macomb County is the political consultant's Holy Land, Disney World, and Lourdes, all in one. The group was fielded by the Republican pollster Kellyanne Fitzpatrick, to answer the question, "Whither women?" (I paraphrase.) How, to be more precise, could the Republican party tailor its message to attract female voters? What—to try one more time—do women want? Accordingly, the group Fitzpatrick assembled was all-female, politically unaligned, blue-to-white collar, and uniformly disgruntled.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Focus-group participants, male or female, seem always to be disgruntled. This may have something to do with a process of self-selection, since the kinds of people who are willing to drive after work to a sparsely furnished, overlit room to talk to a group of strangers for two hours about a subject they care little and know nothing about do not, as a rule, lead lives filled with sunshine and song. Also, elections often turn on the votes of the undecided and unaffiliated and downright alienated; hence these are the voters on whom focus-group specialists will, um, focus.

Not surprisingly, then, the videotaped focus group soon enough degenerated into a gripe session, a water-cooler chin-wag in which the cooler pours out nothing but bile. "When I say 'Republican,'" Fitzpatrick asked the assembled women, "what's the first thing that comes to mind?"

"Money," a large woman said loudly.

"Big money," another large woman spat out.

And "politician"?

"I just, for me, don't believe anything they say. They just tell you what you want to hear."

"It doesn't matter who you elect, from my opinion."

"The president is just a figurehead to me, it's the Congress that does everything. But they never do what they say they're going to do."

"Me, I vote for the person—doesn't matter if they're Democrat or Republican."

And Bill Clinton? Fitzpatrick asked. "Has he caused more pain or has he felt it?"

"I'm not happy with him," said a woman, who, incidentally, looked like she wouldn't be happy if Ed McMahon walked in and handed her a check from Publisher's Clearinghouse. "He's going on about kids smoking—it's all I hear. Well, whatever happened to medical reform? What about that? He doesn't talk about that anymore. Did I miss something?" Yes, ma'am. You did.

In comparing notes with focus-group vets, I've discovered several universal themes. People hate politicians, think politics is a con. They say that politicians tell them only what they want to hear and wonder why politicians never listen to them. They think the mainstream press is wholly biased and inaccurate and rely on it for all their information. They cheer bipartisan compromise and disdain congressmen who won't stand on principle. They want to balance the budget by cutting congressional perks. They hate negative campaigning and, as the campaign progresses, remember only the negative things they hear.

The most cringe-making moments in the Macomb County focus group came when Fitzpatrick asked the participants why they felt as they did. This is supposed to be the point of focus groups, after all—to map the subterranean currents of public opinion, to divine the *why* beneath the *what*.

"Why do you say that?" she would ask.

Long, painful silence. Many shrugs.

Finally: "I can't give you a reason." "It's just the way I feel, is all." "It's 'cause that's how it is," and soon they were all talking at once. A kind of sophistry quickly set in. One woman said her health insurance had not covered a procedure she had recently undergone. This is why she wants nationalized health insurance. *Ergo et QED*. Given their obstinate lack of interest in the subject, asking a group of average Americans about politics is like asking a gang of stevedores to solve a problem in astrophysics. Before long they're explaining, not merely that the moon is made of cheese, but what kind of cheese it is, and whether it is properly aged, and how it would taste on a Trisket.

From this roiling stew of ignorance and stupidity, the focus-group wizard is supposed to distill some populist wisdom. As critics of focus groups often point out, it is difficult to grasp what people are thinking when they aren't. Combining her focus-group research with poll results, Fitzpatrick composed a "playbook for Republicans" called "Winning the Women's Vote."

Her report closed with a section on "communicating to women voters," designed for sweaty-palmed congressmen desperate to please the ladies back home. "Words are very important in communicating to women," Fitzpatrick wrote. "Some hard and fast rules: Never say 'Tax Cut' without preceding it with 'Middle Class.' Never Say 'Cut Government Spending' without calling it 'Wasteful'."

If you want to know how the results of focus groups are used, listen closely to your favorite politician, assuming you have one. A focus group can influence everything from the color of the shirt a candidate wears to the part in his hair to which issues he dwells upon and which he avoids. But in the current craze it is political language that is most heavily determined by focus groups. "Language," Frank Luntz is fond of saying, "is everything."

Frank Luntz is the Republicans' uncrowned king of focus groups. He is widely credited with designing the Contract with America, which, in turn, is widely credited with the GOP victory in 1994. He takes credit, most recently, for shaping the Republican vow to "end the IRS as we know it"—a vow that brought down the house when it bellowed forth from both Jack Kemp and Bob Dole during their acceptance speeches

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in San Diego. "I knew—*I knew*—that line would go through the roof," Luntz told me.

How? "Because I tested it!" These days Luntz specializes in "instant response," a sub-genre of focus groups, a craze within the craze. In instant response, a large focus group, 35 to 50 people, is shown a video of a speech or commercial. In their hands they hold dials wired to a computer.

On another television, unseen by them but closely watched by the moderator, a graph rolls across the video image. On the graph are lines reflecting the group's reactions in real time. When the lines curve above 5, heading toward 10, it means the participants like what they see and hear; lines sinking below 5 show they're not happy.

Luntz's research and Luntz himself hold many congressional Republicans in thrall. Walking the halls of the Capitol with him can take time, as he is often stopped by the members.

"What have you got for me?" they ask eagerly, and usually Luntz has something focus-group fresh. A few weeks ago he discovered that focus groups don't like it when a candidate says, "We will *deny* benefits to illegal aliens." But when the candidate announces, "We will *not give* benefits to illegal aliens," the lines on the graph smile upward. This semantic pearl he has dropped in the trembling hands of every grateful congressman who asks.

Newt Gingrich is a Luntz admirer, and Luntz spent time in the week of Sept. 23 preparing Gingrich for a debate in Williamsburg, Va., with Trent Lott, Tom Daschle, and Dick Gephardt. "Preparing" Gingrich, in this instance, meant feeding the speaker soundbites that had brought coos from focus groups around the country.

The night of the debate, Sept. 29, Luntz convened an instant-response focus group of about 35 swing voters in a Williamsburg motel. TV monitors were placed before rows of chairs in a dreary conference room in the motel basement.

Luntz began with a pep talk. ("I need to let them know that they can't pull one over on me," he had told me earlier.) "You must give me your reaction on a second-by-second basis," he told them now, explaining how the dials worked. "I want you to feel comfortable. Tell me what you think. Tell me what you feel."

As it happened, Virginia senator John Warner was debating his opponent that night as well. Frank switched on the last few minutes of the Warner debate to warm up the group and gauge their reaction. Warner's Foghorn Leghorn countenance appeared on the screen, and in the back of the room, on Luntz's TV monitor, we could see the graph superimposed on it. All the lines were on 5—neutral. Warner spoke. "React to every single thing he says," Frank called out. The lines rose into favorable territory. And then Warner said: "I think it's important that we end the IRS as we know it." And the lines spiked up.

"You see?" Frank whispered to me excitedly. "You see? Didn't I tell you?" Warner is a Luntz client. "He just eats this stuff up."

The Gingrich debate was a focus group's dream. Focus groups, especially with swing voters, complain incessantly about the incivility, the partisanship, in politics. Mention "Republican" or "Democrat" and the participants frown, the lines on the graph head south. Speak softly, speak of consensus and cooperation, and the lines will climb like rockets.

Gingrich and Lott had, of course, been marinating in focus-group-approved language; so too Gephardt and Daschle. All national politicians in 1996 are focus groupies. As a consequence the debate was sleepier than a fly-fishing show on cable. The two Republicans smiled at the two Democrats across a table, as they pelted each other with little marshmallows of rhetoric.

"I hope," said Lott in his opening remarks, "we will not get involved in what quite often has been partisanship and name-calling." Fear not! The focus group was happy. It was a happy debate.

"We want to solve the practical everyday problems that people in this country face, Families First," said Gephardt.

"Wasteful Washington spending," said Gingrich.

"We need Families First," said Daschle.

"Common-sense health-insurance reform," said Lott.

"We have got to deal with people's practical everyday problems," said Gephardt.

"My 81-year-old mother-in-law," Gingrich said, "my mom and dad in their seventies."

"We asked people," said Gephardt, "'What are your everyday problems?'"

"Wasteful Washington spending," said Lott. "A common-sense approach."

"Working families," said Daschle. "We call it Families First."

"The four of us can chat in a positive way," said Gingrich. "My mother-in-law is 81. Common-sense practical things."

"My mother is 83 years of age," said Lott. "Tax relief. And one other thing: education."

Only occasionally did the lines frown, when the Democrats would turn dark, forgetting their focus groups. "Deep cuts in Medicare to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans," said Gephardt. "A huge tax break for the wealthiest people in this country," said

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daschle. "Biggest polluters to dirty the air and dirty the water."

So goes debate in a politics ruled by focus groups. Owing perhaps to the occasional Democratic negativity, the Republicans, and particularly Gingrich, scored far better than the Democrats.

Frank was beside himself. "I love this," he said. "I live for this." As soon as the focus group was paid off and dismissed, he rushed to tell Gingrich the good news.

We found the speaker talking on a pay phone outside the press briefing room in another hotel. Gingrich waved. Frank ran up. "You are the only one of the four whose approval went up in a statistically measurable way," he told the speaker.

Gingrich beamed. "Frank says I am the only one of the four whose approval went up in a statistically measurable way," he said into the phone.

Tony Blankley, Gingrich's press secretary, cornered Frank. "My impression is that nobody hit it out of the park," said Blankley. "I mean, there was no blood."

Frank examined his notes. "There's a lot here," he said. "*Common sense*—worked very well. Excellent. *Wasteful Washington spending*—very good. But they've got to remember, tax *relief*, not tax *cuts*."

Blankley nodded.

"And *Families First* worked very well."

"For us?" Blankley said, hopefully.

"No, for them."

"Oh," said Blankley.

"*Practical solutions*—yes . . ." Frank continued, as if to himself.

He went off with Gingrich that night to explain his findings further, and perhaps to celebrate their triumph, and by now he has surely written his standard three-page report, to be distributed to anxious candidates. "It will take the best pieces and the worst pieces," he told me, "and show how they can be used."

You can easily imagine a hapless Republican candidate—or Democrat, too, for the Democrats are as wired with focus groups as their opponents—you can see him standing on a hay bale somewhere under a broiling autumn sun, addressing a half-interested crowd of voters, his sweaty forehead straining with the pressure of so many focus-group soundbites, and wondering: "Did I just say I'd 'cut government spending'? Didn't I say 'cut *wasteful* government spending'? Was it 'middle-class tax relief' or 'tax cut for working families'? Oh God . . ." And deep in his trance he sees the focus groups rise up . . . they are displeased . . .

And here at last is the overriding irony of focus groups, of their use and abuse in contemporary politics. They have come to full flower just at the moment when conventional wisdom tells us that the system resists as never before the hopes and needs and desires of the average voter. And the average voter heartily concurs. In making the complaint he ignores the groveling figure of every politician and political operative in the country hunched around his feet, their eager and upturned faces smeared with the polish from his boots. That, circa 1996, is democracy, which we all honor in theory and practice. For as Winston Churchill famously wrote in Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." Of course, that was before they invented focus groups. ♦

Bibi's Tunnel, Yasser's War

By Charles Krauthammer

Netanyahu opened a tunnel. Arafat started a war. It is hard to find a publication or a government on the planet that has not denounced the opening of the tunnel. About the starting of the war, silence.

The starting of the war is the single most important event in the Middle East since the signing of the Oslo peace accords in September 1993. It not only signals an ominous escalation of the violence. It constitutes a fundamental breach of the Oslo bargain, which was founded on the unequivocal renunciation of violence.

One would think that an event this momentous—and bloody: it has left, as of this writing, 70 people dead—would come in for some serious criticism around the world. It didn't. The tunnel did. The Arab League issued an incendiary libel that the tunnel was "part of an Israeli Zionist plot to destroy the Aqsa Mosque [and] set up the Temple of Solomon." Arafat echoed the lie, inviting Palestinian mobs into the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

street "to express their anger" over this "desecration of the holy places." Express they did, storming Israeli checkpoints and installations. The war was on.

Within a few days, even Palestinian spokesmen were admitting that the tunnel was a pretext. It does not, in fact, go under, on, or even touch the Muslim holy sites on the Temple Mount. But as soon as the West began to catch up with this reality, there was no rethinking of the justification for Palestinian violence. There was a mere shifting of the ground.

Well, yes. The tunnel was a trumped-up charge. But the Palestinian violence could be understood—read: justified—as an expression of pent-up anger over accumulated offenses by the "intransigent" (a perennial Likud-linked adjective once again hauled out for easy use) government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

What are these violations, these *casi belli*? In decreasing order of seriousness, if not frequency of citation, they are:

1) Hebron: Israel is now six months behind its promised schedule of withdrawal from this last occupied Palestinian city.

Yes, but the reason that the redeployment was postponed beyond the March 28 deadline is that in February and March Palestinian terrorists set off four terror bombs in Israel, killing 59. Shimon Peres, the archetypal dove who fell over himself to accommodate Yasser Arafat, was prime minister at the time. (What was the provocation for that violence, then?) It was Peres who halted the Hebron withdrawal.

WITHIN A FEW DAYS EVEN PALESTINIAN SPOKESMEN WERE ADMITTING THAT THE TUNNEL WAS A PRETEXT—AND STILL THE WEST JUSTIFIED THEIR VIOLENCE.

Since taking office, Netanyahu has raised questions about the safety of those 400 Jews left living near the ancient Jewish shrine in Hebron. He demanded changes to security arrangements that might leave these Jews vulnerable to attack by the local Arab population and perhaps even by the armed Palestinian police in the hills above. Netanyahu's concerns were deemed disingenuous, an excuse for indefinite delay. After last month's sacking and murder at Joseph's Tomb, an even smaller Jewish enclave in the Palestinian town of Nablus, one would think that Netanyahu's concerns would be accorded a little more respect. They haven't been.

2) Closure of the West Bank: By not allowing Palestinian workers to come to work in Israel, Netanyahu has caused severe economic misery and hardship.

In fact, the closure, like the Hebron delay, was instituted by the sainted Shimon Peres, also in response to the suicide bombings of February and March. Peres did it as a security measure to make it more difficult for terrorists to infiltrate into Israel. Netanyahu, in his 100 days in office, had already eased these restrictions considerably, more than doubling the number of Palestinians allowed in daily from 22,000 to 50,000. He was negotiating with Arafat for further increases when Arafat called his little war.

3) Settlements: Netanyahu is accused of building new and expanding old Jewish settlements in the territories.

In fact, under the rule of Labor prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Peres, Israeli settlements grew in population by 25,000 over the life of the Oslo agreements. Netanyahu has indicated absolutely clearly that he intends to do precisely what Labor did: allow the thickening of existing settlements. Yes, he reserves the right to establish new settlements. But he has made it equally clear that he has no intention of doing so.

4) Dignity: We are down to the bottom of the barrel. Netanyahu, it seems, was not sufficiently solicitous of the dignity of the Palestinians and, in particular, did not accord proper respect to Arafat, their president. Anthony Lewis, for example, finds it significant that Arafat was once denied the "ability to make a helicopter trip by the Israelis."

When Newt Gingrich shuts down the U.S. government in part because Bill Clinton made him exit by the back door of Air Force One, he is called a cry-baby. He has yet to live down his resulting reputation for pettiness and petulance. And Gingrich, mind you, did not order the Capitol Police to fire on the White House to avenge his dignity. Arafat is allegedly slighted—and Palestinian apologists find in this a justification for war. First, the War of Jenkins's Ear. Now the War of Arafat's Pride.

II

Missing among all this talk of grievance is any mention of Israeli complaints about Palestinian violations of Oslo. Violations are always understood to mean Israeli violations. Yet in return for the myriad of compromises and concessions, territorial and political, granted by the Israelis, the Palestinians committed themselves to only two: changing their national charter that calls for the destruction of Israel and renouncing violence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is the status of these two commitments?

The tortuous saga of the PLO charter is by now almost comical. Arafat first pledged to change it immediately after the Oslo 1 accords were signed in 1993. He did nothing of the sort. Two years later, at the Oslo 2 accords—which gave him (1) control of Kalkilya, Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Tulkharm (all the West Bank cities save Hebron), (2) broad new powers, and (3) a gradual turning over to him of the vast uninhabited "state" lands of the West Bank—he sold that rug to Peres a second time. He pledged that now he would really change the charter. Indeed, he would do so within two months of the inauguration of the Palestinian legislative council.

On April 24, as the deadline approached, Arafat convened the Palestinian National Council and claimed that it had changed the charter. The world press, the American government, and indeed Shimon Peres nodded and applauded. Peres, eager to show some tangible Palestinian gesture before the Israeli election, fatuously hailed this as the greatest ideological change in the Middle East in 100 years.

Benjamin Netanyahu

Chas Fagan

What really happened? The PNC resolution *said* that the charter was amended, but changed not a single word, promising instead that a committee would return with new wording within six months. It is due two weeks from now. You have not heard from this committee in six months. You will not hear from it in two weeks.

What makes this latest Arafat maneuver so farcical is that Arafat thereby managed to sell Peres the rug for a third time—again without delivery. In his letter to Rabin of September 9, 1993, Arafat declared that "the PLO affirms that those articles of the Palestinian covenant which deny Israel's right to exist . . . are now inoperative and no longer valid. Consequently, the PLO undertakes *to submit* to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval *the necessary changes* in regard to the Palestinian covenant" (my italics).

Thus the declaration of inoperativity already occurred in 1993. Its repetition by the PNC in 1996 was a redundancy. Indeed, it was an evasion of the Palestinians' original commitment *to actually change the charter*, not just to say they did.

To date, not a single change. Yet even to raise the issue of this fundamental non-compliance appears odd. In the American mind, the charter is considered a solved—a dead—issue. So dead that when Hanan Ashrawi makes her daily appearances on American television denouncing Israelis for this or that violation of the Oslo accords, not one American reporter ever asks her to explain why on April 24 in the PNC she voted *against* revision of the Palestinian charter. She was one of the 54 (vs. 504) voting against this extraordinarily tepid (indeed, essentially meaningless) gesture of compliance with Oslo. First she opposes even the pretense of living up to one of the two major peace commitments the Palestinians undertook. Then she rails about Netanyahu's tardiness on Hebron and some such.

III

But it is the other pledge Arafat made to Rabin in his Sept. 9, 1993, letter that constitutes the gravest breach of Oslo. The change in the charter Arafat merely avoided. The pledge of non-violence, however, he has now brazenly flouted.

Turning the guns of the Palestinian police against Israel was the truly historic event of the "tunnel" riots. In fact, the application of the very word "police" to these people is risible. Where in the United States do police walk the streets carrying AK-47s? This is a Palestinian army. The Israeli Labor government had invited its erstwhile mortal enemy to bring these 40,000 armed men into its midst—mortgaging everything against the hope of Palestinian adherence to Arafat's public renunciation of violence. The Oslo accords are quite explicit on the issue: "The PLO commits itself to . . . a peaceful resolution of the conflict. . . . Accordingly, the PLO renounces . . . acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators."

Yet ever since Netanyahu came to power, Arafat and his Palestinian Authority leadership have been brandishing the threat of renewed violence. For

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

months they have been warning that they were prepared to restart the intifada, this time with machine guns.

Arafat was indeed frustrated. He was frustrated to encounter an Israeli administration that did not see the peace accords as a one-way street, a process of sequential Israeli concessions in return for which Arafat need do nothing but smile during photo-ops. Arafat was finally facing an Israeli government that was demanding reciprocity. It was demanding, for example, that he honor the Oslo understanding that permitted no PLO offices in Jerusalem.

He chafed at these demands and resented that Israeli concessions were made dependent on them. That—not the tunnel—is why he decided on war. He would show Netanyahu that he had the ultimate card to play: his men under arms.

He used the tunnel to incite the crowds to restart the intifada. Mobs then descended on Israeli checkpoints and settlements. When Israeli soldiers responded, predictably, with tear gas, rubber bullets, and warning shots, Arafat played his trump. His soldiers opened fire.

The claim that he lost control of his army is simply false. By Saturday, when he realized that the toll was mounting and that he could not sustain the war any longer, he finally called for his men to cease fire. The violence stopped.

Michael Ramirez

Yasser Arafat

During the intifada, the stone-throwing disorders of 1987-93, the West Bank was Belfast. Arafat has just demonstrated that he could turn it into Beirut, his old home turf, a killing ground of armed militias.

Such are the bitter fruits of Oslo. And perhaps its death. Arafat's playing the war card fundamentally undermines the very premise of the Oslo accords. If the Palestinians may declare war whenever they deem themselves "frustrated" with the pace of negotiations, then "peace process" become just a euphemism for step-by-step Israeli surrender.

And yet Arafat emerged from the Washington summit with no condemnation of his little war and no commitment on his part not to start it again.

IV

A terrible realization is emerging from the smoke of the "tunnel" riots: Oslo has become untenable, yet irreversible. Untenable because Arafat has shown this "peace process" has achieved no peace. Peace cannot just mean no violence today; it means the promise of no violence tomorrow. Those who believed there really was such a promise have had their illusions shattered.

And irreversible not because, as naively believed by many, of a true change of heart of the Palestinians. But because, having now planted a 40,000-man armed force in its midst, Israel has no other recourse but to continue. Israel has rendered itself hostage.

What to do? The immediate agenda for the peace process is obvious. Netanyahu, who before the tunnel riots had every intention of withdrawing from Hebron with appropriate security arrangements, will find a way to do so within a few weeks or perhaps months. An airport in Gaza, too, will be granted to Arafat. Closures will be eased and, if there is no violence, Israeli forces will withdraw their armor from the West Bank.

These are concessions easily granted. In return for what? Netanyahu has the intelligence to see the forest from the trees. And the forest here, the main objective, has to do with the renewal of the renunciation of violence.

Yes, Arafat once again gets to sell a rug twice. He promised non-violence in Oslo. And he broke it wantonly last month with impunity. He needs to formally promise to do it again. But that is not the real prize for Israel in the coming negotiations. Netanyahu's key task is not simply to get Arafat to recommit himself to non-violence. After all, Arafat can just as easily break a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new pledge as his old one. Netanyahu's key objective is to get the United States, as the arbiter of the peace process, to declare non-violence a norm it will hold Arafat to.

Netanyahu did not get that at the Washington summit. Which is why it was a failure for Israel. Sure, Netanyahu did not give away the store under world and Clinton administration pressure. But holding on makes for deliverance, not success. Dunkirk, Churchill noted, was a miracle *and* a disaster.

Israel cannot afford that Arafat's next deployment of violence and war go unremarked, uncondemned, unpunished by the United States. What Israel needs now, in return for all it is about to concede, is but one thing: a firm American commitment to back Israel to the hilt next time Arafat plays the war card.

That is the only possible deterrent to Arafat's playing it again. The next Mideast milestone should be an Oslo 3: an ostentatious hand-shaking ceremony on the White House lawn in which (1) Israel gives a grab bag of Oslo 2 goodies to the Palestinians, (2) Arafat smiles—he'll promise, too, but his promises are not worth the paper they are written on—and (3) the United States solemnly declares that from now on it will monitor war-making.

Arafat may not fear the Israeli response to another round of war. Yes, he has many dead, but they serve as martyrs, fuel for the cause. And, as seen in the last few weeks, war-making is a source of great public support for Arafat. In Gaza and the West Bank, he has never been as popular as today, now that he has turned his guns on the Jews. (That swelling of support for Arafat for just that reason should make peace dreamers question their cherished assumption about a fundamental Palestinian change of heart. But peace dreamers never question their assumptions.)

What Arafat may really fear, however, is the wrath of the United States. He cannot afford to alienate the one true arbiter in the region. If playing the war card doesn't draw fire just from the Israelis—Arafat has shown that he can survive, indeed thrive on, that—but from the United States, he might think twice. The prospect of losing the leverage and patronage that come from the American connection may stay his hand.

That is why the next round of negotiations must end with a tripartite reaffirmation of the renunciation of violence—and an American commitment to, this time, enforce it. Anything less, and the peace process will not survive. ♦

The Bill Clinton of the Sceptered Isle

By Irwin M. Stelzer

Blackpool, England

Ban tobacco advertising and handguns. End welfare as we know it by getting people off the dole and into work. Educate our people so they can compete in the new global marketplace. Cut class size. Get tough on persistent young offenders. Keep a tight rein on public spending. Preserve old folks' benefits. Support Emily's list. Restore hope. A double-digit lead in the polls.

The Democratic convention in Chicago? Not exactly. Rather, the Labour party conference in Britain, a gathering of the rank and file to hear the leader of "New" Labour, Tony Blair, describe the policies he hopes will preserve his party's 15-20 point lead in the polls and return it to power after almost two decades in the wilderness. No more talk of socializing the means of production and distribution; no more talk of higher taxes (except perhaps on "millionaires") or of more spending; no more business bashing. New Labour is the party of frugal government. But compassionate. In short, it is Britain's version of Bill Clinton's New Democrats, a party devoted both to compassion and to budgetary probity.

The analogies with America are not happenstance. Start with the fact that Blair and Clinton are both the products of prestigious law schools, that both met their lawyer wives while training for careers neither man seriously intended to pursue, that both of those

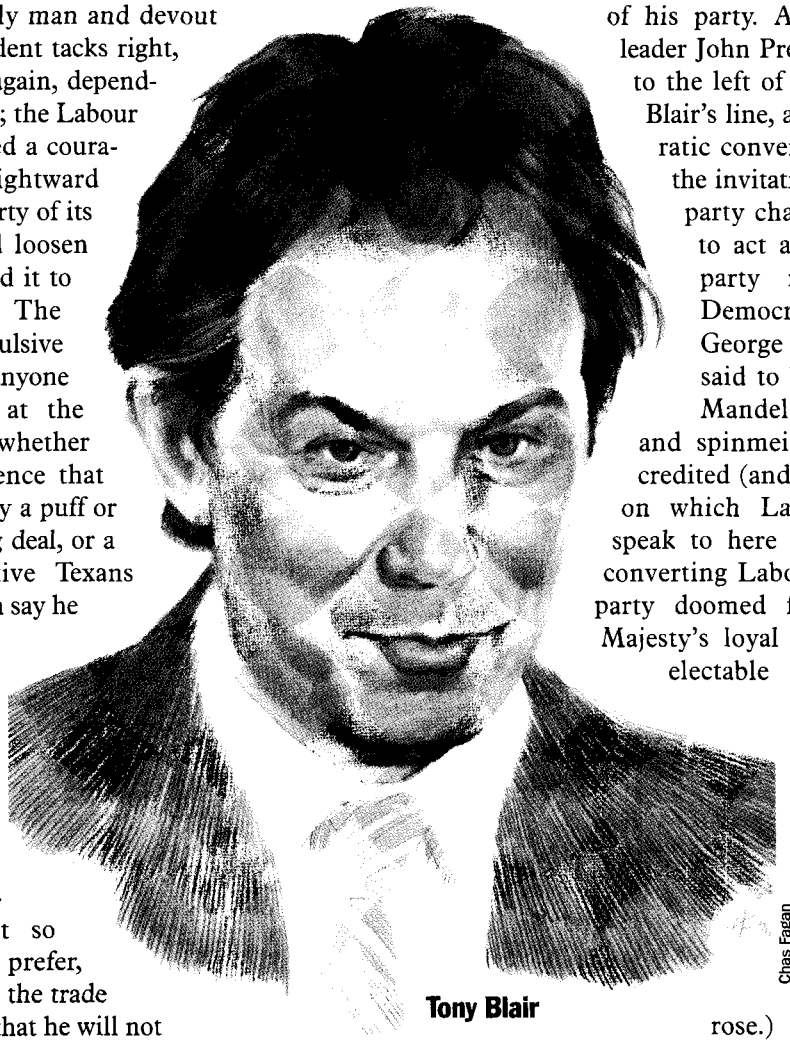
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wives are leftish tough-minded women who hide their light under a bushel of homebaked cookies at campaign time, that both have fantasies of being rock musicians (sax for Clinton, electric guitar for Blair), that both understand that winning is the necessary precedent to accomplishing anything in politics, and that both are formidable and persuasive campaigners.

This is not to deny the differences between the two men. The president is a more or less confessed philanderer; the prime-minister-in-waiting is a genuinely devoted family man and devout Christian. The president tacks right, left, and then right again, depending on the latest polls; the Labour leader has maintained a courageous and steady rightward course to strip his party of its socialist history and loosen the ties that still bind it to the trade unions. The president has a compulsive need to be loved by anyone with whom he is at the moment in contact, whether it is an MTV audience that wants to hear him say a puff or two of dope is no big deal, or a group of conservative Texans who want to hear him say he made a mistake when he raised taxes; the Labour leader is willing to tell the leftists in his party that he will not adopt the red-in-tooth-and-claw socialism or tax-and-spend policies that so many of them still prefer, and he does confront the trade unions with the fact that he will not let them dictate policy even if they do account for half of all the funds that finance his party. In the character race, Clinton comes in a distant second to Britain's wannabe prime minister.

But politics is not only, or perhaps even primarily, about the personal strengths and weaknesses of the leaders of parties. If it were, Bob Dole would be far ahead in the polls and Margaret Thatcher would still be PM. It is about winning elections, and about attempting to use those victories to shape a nation in the image of the victor. And Blair's people see in Clinton a winner worth emulating. In 1992, Blair and now-shadow chancellor Gordon Brown came to America to study the Clinton campaign. So did Philip Gould, Labour's chief pollster. Clinton's New Democrats, says *London Times* columnist Anthony Howard, "lighted the path" down which New Labour has since traveled.

So Blair traveled to Washington in April for a chat and a photo-op with the president, an important event for a young Labour leader eager to demonstrate to the folks at home the newfound respectability of his party. And deputy Labour leader John Prescott, personally far to the left of his boss but toeing Blair's line, attended the Democratic convention in Chicago at the invitation of his old friend, party chairman Chris Dodd, to act as host at a Labour party reception for the Democratic delegates. George Stephanopoulos is said to be the idol of Peter Mandelson, the Blair guru and spinmeister who is widely credited (and blamed, depending on which Labour delegate you speak to here in Blackpool) with converting Labour from a hard-left party doomed forever to be Her Majesty's loyal opposition into an electable left-of-center party that doesn't throw a fright into middle England. (Among other things, Mandelson replaced Labour's traditional party symbol, the red flag, with a far less threatening red rose.) And the Labour Women's Network, devoted to increasing the number of women—well, Labour women—in Parliament, has set up Emily's List UK, unashamedly poaching the name and techniques of its American progenitor.



Chas Fagan

Tony Blair

The similarity in the treatment of women in politics is remarkable. Both Labour and the Democrats seek to increase the number of women representing them in their nations' respective legislatures and are willing to use quotas (though Blair is unenthusiastic about this). Both leaders play down the roles their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powerful and intelligent wives will play in their administrations. Bill Clinton's retreat from 1992's "Get two for the price of one" was emphasized when his spin doctors rushed around assuring everyone that the president didn't really mean it when he recently told a television interviewer that his wife would play a large role in unreforming welfare reform if he wins this election. Tony Blair has a similar problem. His wife, Cherie Booth, is a successful, tough-minded barrister who is intensely interested in employees' rights and domestic violence. She once ran for Parliament on a platform far to the left of the one on which her husband now stands. Britons are realistic enough to know that there will be pillow talk in Number 10; but even more than their American brethren, they don't want unelected spouses to run the show.

In what the *Sunday Times* described as an attempt to portray Cherie Blair "as a Hillary Clinton-like figure who will pull the strings if her husband makes it to Downing Street," Tory prime minister John Major took to having his more traditionally domestic wife, Norma, accompany him on the campaign trail to tell how she grates and freezes stale bits of cheese and uses a tea bag more than once. The point was to contrast loyal homebody Norma with Cherie. Hillary-like, Mrs. Blair responded by reporting herself a devoted knitter. "The quest for ordinariness among politicians' wives is the sine qua non of modern electioneering, so terrified have we become of their bewitching powers and hidden agendas," wrote Lesley White, a columnist for the *Sunday Times*. "One might have hoped that the late 20th century would demand charisma, brains, and deep political convictions of these women, but no, we seem to want bread-bakers and quilt-makers."

BRITONS ARE REALISTIC ENOUGH TO KNOW THERE WILL BE PILLOW TALK IN NUMBER 10; BUT THEY DON'T WANT UNELECTED SPOUSES TO RUN THE SHOW.

All of this is merely the surface manifestation of important changes in the politics of the Left. For one thing, purist ideologues, who once frowned on the use of "modern" campaign techniques, have learned the game. True, some in the Labour party used the Blackpool conference to call for the dismissal of the party's spin doctors, Peter Mandelson being the primary but not the only target. But they are in a minority. Although still low-key and a bit amateurish by American standards, the Labour conclave was "modern" by British standards—speeches were interspersed with videos of small businessmen extolling the virtues of Labour's worker-training schemes, and the schedule was followed with some rigor. Most interesting, the podium was arranged so that the delegates present saw the speakers standing against a good old red background, even as the television audience simultaneously saw a neutral backdrop.

More important than technique is substance. The Left knows it has no money to play with. Globalized money markets impose fiscal prudence, with depreciation in the value of a currency the price to be paid for profligacy. And tax increases are politically impossible; George Bush's current status as a private citizen and the Tory party's impending defeat are both proof of that proposition. So shadow chancellor Gordon Brown, after bowing to custom by addressing the delegates as "Comrades," told them he would give no quarter in the battle to maintain a more or less balanced budget and proudly assumed the title of "iron chancellor" (one he may attempt to shed after a quick check of his history books).

Brown knows that Labour has lost election after election because the British middle class fears that, given the power to do so, the party will raise taxes and squeeze the rich, near-rich, and the merely comfortable "until the pips squeak" (as one Labour chancellor is widely believed to have promised to do some years ago). Britons are taxed even more heavily than Americans—the Tories pledged to lower taxes and instead raised them immediately upon being elected in 1992—and they tell pollsters they are willing to pay still higher taxes in order to fund the social services. But while they respond "Certainly" when asked by pollsters, "Would you pay a few pence more in order to reduce queues at the hospitals and overcrowding in the schools?"—they vote, in the privacy of their voting booths, against anyone who threatens to raise taxes.

Blair and Brown know that they must convince middle-class voters that a Labour government does not mean higher taxes—except perhaps for a one-time windfall-profits tax on utilities and the closing of "loopholes" used by "millionaires" who pay no tax at all. But they know, too, that they must burnish their liberal (in the American sense) credentials by promising to deliver the social justice that so many Labourites feel was subordinated to the unfettered free-market ideology of Margaret Thatcher (whose strong leadership style Blair openly admires).

These twin imperatives led Labour to call for a change in the way welfare is used, rather than for increased expenditures—to provide a hand up instead

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a handout, to finance education and success rather than pay for failure. And to swallow means-testing, the bugaboo of the old Left. If elected, Labour proposes to end the payment of child benefits to wealthy families—all British families now receive such payments, regardless of their incomes—and use the freed-up money to fund more intensive education for students from poorer homes. Sounding like Al Gore, Blair promises to "modernize government" and to deliver "not bigger government, but better government."

But there is still a place for that good old-time religion, egalitarianism. Money now spent to fund education for gifted but poor children, Blair promises to use instead on behalf of all children. The educational system will be revamped to end separation of children based on performance, which Blair calls "educational apartheid" and believes props up the class system (a system he says he despises). Above all, constraints on public spending are driving Britain's Labour party in the same direction they have driven Clinton's Democrats. Like Willie Sutton, who robbed banks because "that's where the money is," leftish parties have to tap corporate coffers in order to pay for their social schemes. Clinton pushed legislation that requires corporations to provide family leave and to increase their minimum-wage payments; Blair has cut a deal with British Telecom to allow it to enter the television business in return for providing all schools with "free" broadband cable facilities. (In a rhetorical flight that would have made Al Gore and Newt Gingrich beam with pride of authorship, Blair promised the conference that "no child will be without access to a computer." It's not the same as a computer on every desk and two PCs in every home, but close enough.) The cost of these and various other impositions on business will, ultimately, be reflected in higher prices to consumers, a hidden tax. But the operative word is "hidden," and therefore unlikely to produce retaliation at the polls.

BLAIR IS BLESSED WITH A TORY OPPOSITION DEVOID OF IDEAS AFTER 17 YEARS IN OFFICE AND SPLIT OVER THE SIZE AND ROLE OF THE STATE.

Of course, not all of the delegates assembled in this vibrant working-class resort—with its rollercoaster, ferris wheel, amusement arcades, souvenir shops, and what the local gastronome describes as "endless supplies of fish and chips, burgers, cockles, candy floss, and sticky rock"—are happy with the conversion of their party from a socialist to a social democratic one. I had to pass through pickets brandishing "Tony Blair is a Tory" placards to get to witness the Labour leader's conference performance. The loudest cheers inside the hall were reserved for the mention of the most left-leaning members of the shadow cabinet: John Prescott, Robin Cook (foreign affairs), and Margaret Beckett (industrial policy).

Not all of Blair's comrades are as tax-averse as he. Whether they will continue to defer to their leader after he has performed his assigned task—getting them elected—is an open question. The wise bet is this: Soon after becoming prime minister in May 1997, Blair will have a shootout with his Left, which will want to tax and spend for a variety of schemes. Whose blood will be on the floor of the cabinet room in Number 10 Downing Street, no one cares to predict. But that's a problem for the future. At the moment, the disaffected Labourites have had enough of losing and—with exceptions here and there—are holding their fire in order to display the party unity that British voters are thought to value above almost all other virtues. The body of the party is, then, both anatomically and politically correct. Its heart is on the left, its head is on (the) right, and it is speaking with one voice—Tony Blair's.

For now, all is sweet unity. Blair's specific promises are of less relevance to his electoral prospects than are the weaknesses of his Tory adversaries. Just as Clinton's strong performance in the polls is unaffected by his weak performance in office, so Blair's likely triumph next May will not depend primarily on what he says or does between now and then (assuming that he sticks broadly to his no-new-taxes pledge and maintains his grip on his party). For Blair is blessed with a Tory opposition devoid of ideas after 17 years in office, badly split between those who want to grow the welfare state and those who want to shrink the size and role of government in order to cut taxes. The Conservatives are also busy quarreling over whether to participate in the emerging federal Europe, are beset with sexual and financial scandals, and are led by an earnest but colorless prime minister.

If Blair can remain unthreatening to the middle class and continue to convince his party that his version of democratic socialism—fiscally responsible, yet humane—satisfies their egalitarian yearnings, he will soon have an opportunity to fulfill the "covenant with Britain" to which he committed himself in Blackpool. Yes, a Gingrichian covenant to deliver a Clintonian program using a Gore-like reinvented government. Who's the colony now? ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JFK: THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL

By Noemie Emery

When does a presidency that lasted less than three years intrigue the world years after it ended? When its interest lies outside politics, in fundamental and eternal themes. The Cold War centrism of John Kennedy's presidency may bore today's think tanks, but in the complications of his life, any student of the great social novels of the 19th and early 20th centuries finds familiar ground: ambition and power and business and money; crass new money and tired old money; filial struggles, sibling love, and sibling rivalry; gifted people not quite fatally flawed by interesting sins such as lust and avarice—Jack and Joe, Jack and Young Joe, Jack and Jackie, Jack and Nixon. John Kennedy *is* the great American novel, possibly the greatest novel of all time.

Themes recur, not only from Trollope and Tolstoy and Eliot, but from all those American novelists concerned with the movement of power and money in a fluid class structure. Thus we meet the crass millionaire from an immigrant background, hungry for power and social acceptance; and the assimilated, more refined son who attains them, the Irish Catholic who wins our affection by seeming so much like a WASP. We meet the ingenue, raised penniless in the midst of big money, already addicted to beauty and luxury, trained to marry rich by her shrew of a mother: Jacqueline Bouvier is Edith Wharton's Lily Bart, with an iron will and much more intelligence, who will not only flourish in the *House of Mirth*, but have the last laugh there.

"You'll get it back with your face," her mother tells Lily, of the fortune lost by her imprudent father. "The face was one of an exotic beauty," writes Edward Klein of Jackie, as Bart meets Jack Kennedy, son of Jay Gatsby, at a carefully planned dinner in Georgetown in 1951. Ostensibly a casual evening for some charming young people, it had been engineered with care by Joe Kennedy's agents, step one in a transfer of money for power and as calculated as the meeting of Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves. It is this wedge of the Kennedy story—the Jack-Jackie angle—that two new books on the Kennedy marriage evoke. Klein, in *All Too Human: The Love Story of Jack and Jackie Kennedy* (Pocket Books, 406 pages, $23), and Christopher Andersen, in *Jack and Jackie: Portrait of an American Marriage* (Morrow, 370 pages, $24), look both forward to the new age of packaged political families and back to the old one of dynastic bargains. They tell the story of two people who seemed truly mated, in an imperfect bond that was also a practical transaction.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged," Jane Austen tells us, "that a single man, in possession of a fortune, must be in want of a wife." Especially if he wants to be president. John Kennedy did not want a wife (and afterward seldom behaved as if he thought he had one), but he wanted power and children, and a wife was a means, not an end. How the bargain was struck—between Jackie's need for "*real* money" and Joe Kennedy's need for a Catholic woman with "brains, beauty, and breeding" to validate his son's quest for executive office—is chess on a very high level, on the order of *The Golden Bowl*. Jackie was found as a prospect by Joe's friend Arthur Krock, whose socialite wife was a friend of Jackie's mother, and who knew of the gap between Jackie's inheritance ($3,000) and the world she was groomed to inhabit. Krock ordered his protégé Charles Bartlett to bring them together. He did.

Later, there are two other scenes worthy of Henry James and Edith Wharton: one in Hyannis, before the engagement, when Joe Kennedy takes Jackie aside to tell her she will want for nothing if she marries his child; another years later, when the marriage has been stretched to its limits by Jack's infidelities, when Joe and Jackie meet at a posh New York restaurant to negotiate the conditions under which the Kennedy marriage will continue. In fact, for most of these books, until Joe's stroke when Jack is president, one feels the marriage is maintained by Joe and Jackie, around the indifferent, almost marginal, presence of Jack.

What these books and others agree on is that John Kennedy—like his father and Jackie's (who slept around on his honeymoon)—was almost genetically incapable of domesticity or commitment as these are understood. Worse than philandering were his detachment and boredom: Famously given to compartmentalizing his life—to keep anyone in it from having him

Noemie Emery writes frequently for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

totally—he relegated his wife to a discrete part of his experience, instead of giving his life to be shared. Immediately after the engagement, he went off with friends on what can only be described as a whoring vacation. On the honeymoon, he was bored within days, suggesting Jackie fly home while he visited old friends. In 1956, after she had gallantly supported him at the Chicago convention, he left her with her mother at Newport, to await their first child, and went off on yet another European orgy. Later, when the child was born dead, he balked at returning. As these authors write, he was depressed and shaken at losing the baby, but others had to explain to him that his presence might console his wife. It was after this that Jackie asserted her leverage, knowing a separation or scandal would destroy his ambitions. Trollope couldn't have plotted it better. The marriage survived.

Yet on some levels, the couple had bonded. As Klein writes, "During this period, when many of their friends thought that their marriage had sunk to the low point, Jack and Jackie spent many nights at home going through books," combing them for campaign purposes, her more exotic artistic sensibilities complementing his historical interests. "There was a strong collaborative aspect in this supposedly dark period," said Charles Bartlett. "Jackie helped lay the intellectual groundwork for a lot of the ideas in that presidential race. It was she who dug up a lot of the quotes that Jack started dropping in his speeches in the course of that campaign."

Within the frame of material interests, they were still a couple, who meshed well, understood each other, shared much. Klein's description of the young Jackie Bouvier—"a voracious reader, who expressed herself wonderfully, and had a literary wit"—also applied to Jack Kennedy. As Klein notes, they helped each other's hidden sides surface: her ambition and toughness (her letters to Nixon, quoted by Christopher Matthews in *Kennedy and Nixon*, show a remarkable grasp of the political temperament), his introspection and reverie. Each had a literary imagination, a romantic streak, a deep sense of history. And a wish to move in it: a sensibility that reached, and thrilled, the public. From this grew an excitement that has not yet subsided and that truly was *their* work, not his. Something new had entered the chemical balance: As Joe Kennedy may have sensed when he insisted that his son's wife have "breeding," she could change the way that Jack was seen. With her there, the progress of the Kennedys from fame and money to aristocracy was accomplished in one leap. Next to her, the Kennedys seemed like old money. Beside her, Jack looked like a prince. Boston faded, and Harvard and England seemed central. She made him the Irish Brahmin, who captured the imagination of the world and the country as one merely Irish, or merely a Brahmin, could not have. Tough and romantic, athletic and literate, ethnic and Anglophile and Francophile, stunning to look at, they became a public phenomenon, wish fulfillment of a very high order. And therein lies the trouble, and the tale.

Chas Fagan

"How do you run against *that*?" Matthews has a Nixon aide thinking, as he watches a film of the couple during the campaign. In fact, the Nixons were enraged at the depiction of John Kennedy as a model husband, and Kennedy himself feared rumors of his "girling" might explode. If a couple appears in public and is charming, are they saying the marriage is perfect? If it isn't, should they be outed, exposed? Or are they only saying they are what they seem at the moment—two people in one place, at one time, who deserve the freedom of their private lives? Kennedy was not the ideal partner, and the marriage was often under great stress. Yet they were also a unit, who shared much and worshipped their children. Both views were real.

In John F. Kennedy, the prevalent belief that a public man can be judged by his doings in private

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meets its ultimate test. It is not merely that the reckless, sometimes callous, private person is so different from the disciplined and prudent public figure. It is that there are many private figures, who tell us different things. There is the playboy, a distant and indifferent husband. There is also the invalid, born with a malformed spine and a failed immune system, always in pain and often in danger, whose daily routine involved a staggering array of pills, baths, tests, and injections; who had faced death four times before 40 and was told to expect to die young. (He did.) Which face is real—the rake or the stoic? Or do they connect? Did Kennedy, consciously or otherwise, allot to himself the right to indulgence to make up for bad health and bad luck? "He was so disciplined," a friend said of him. "But when it came to women, he was a different person. It was like Jekyll and Hyde."

In Gary Hart and Bob Packwood, license seems symptomatic of a general oddness; and in "The Politics of Promiscuity," Joe Klein makes a case for seeing the public and private Bill Clinton as one. But for each of these cases there is another—a John Kennedy, a Moshe Dayan, a Martin Luther King—whose license seems an aberration in an otherwise controlled persona. Compulsive philanderers like King and Kennedy proved capable of moral leadership. Public leaders like Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt failed dramatically as spouses and parents and led complex, unhappy private lives. Was the real FDR the duplicitous husband or the gallant survivor of polio? Or both? What do we say of the man who is a good father and an errant husband? Or an indifferent father and a good husband—to his second wife? Are two marriages, one of them good, better or worse than a single, long-sustained union marred by adultery? And who decides?

Of the complex strata of private identity, which ones are relevant to the public man? In the August 12 *New Republic*, Jean Bethke Elshtain decries the "political attitude that presumes an identity, rather than a relationship, between the personal and the political" and leads to "the harsh conclusion that an episode of weakness exhausts the entire truth of the individual's private life." John Kennedy was at times a bad husband, but he was a good son, a good father, a good brother and friend. Within the strained marriage were affinities and compensations. Jackie did not marry him or stay with him only for money, but because he offered something else that she wanted: the opportunity for a "tremendous" life. She was often depressed, resentful, driven to spending sprees and (these books say) retaliatory infidelities. She did not leave, or want to. In the campaign appearances where they looked so appealing, they were a couple, united in a common enterprise. In the White House, they were united, too.

Chas Fagan

In November 1960, the bargain begun in May 1951 paid off for all parties. Joe paid back FDR and the WASPs who had snubbed him; Jack got his chance to use power in history; Jackie, who had grown up as the poor relation in other people's great houses, was now mistress of the greatest house of all.

What Jackie did as first lady is hard to measure, since she was a type few politicians marry or know. At 19, the young Eleanor Roosevelt found her way to the settlement houses of New York and the advocacy that would become her vocation. At around the same age, the young Jackie Bouvier won first prize in *Vogue* magazine's Prix de Paris, writing wittily of poets and dancers, placing herself firmly at the crossroads where communications, art, and fashion meet. She would become a student, restorer, conservator, and editor of books dealing largely with artistic experience: All her life, she would make the preservation and integrity of the aesthetic inheritance her main calling and cause. If Mrs. Roosevelt was a political advocate, Mrs. Clinton an activist-lawyer, other first ladies primarily wives, mothers, and hostesses, Mrs. Kennedy saw herself as an "Overall Art Director of the Twentieth Century," a title she coined in her winning essay for *Vogue*.

She was a woman for whom caring about the way things looked mattered almost as a moral impera-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive. She saw things as metaphor, language, as symbols of a state of mind. Backed by Joe and his checkbook, she met designer Oleg Cassini before the inauguration to plot the sets and costumes for a long-running play. "We spoke of how fashion is a mirror of history," Cassini writes; "we discussed the message her clothes would send—simple, youthful, but magisterial elegance—and how she would reinforce the message of her husband's administration through her appearance. 'You have an opportunity here,' I told her, 'for an American Versailles.'" Inevitably, the entertainments she staged for state occasions presaged the ornate decors of Masterpiece-Theater and Merchant-and-Ivory versions of the great social novels. Her dress style—clean lines rendered in opulent fabrics—suggested simplicity married to richness, the ideal of republican power. Margaret Truman credits her with being the only first lady to master "the perilous passage between democracy and upper-class style," enabling "a reign of genteel taste which managed to mesmerize Americans without alienating them."

Truman also suggests that the energy Jackie poured into her restoration projects was a bid for her husband's approval. To some extent, it succeeded, along with the trips, to Canada and France, that made her an international sensation. "For the first time," Cassini says, "Jack realized she was not just a wife, but a great political tool—a force to be reckoned with, and a powerful symbol. . . . She began to realize her own political value, and that boosted her confidence. From that moment on, the relationship changed." Cleverly positioning herself outside of politics—as a symbol of the nation's cultural heritage—she was what so many partisan women fail to become, a potent asset, changing more than any other first lady the way her husband's administration was perceived. And the greatest test was yet to come.

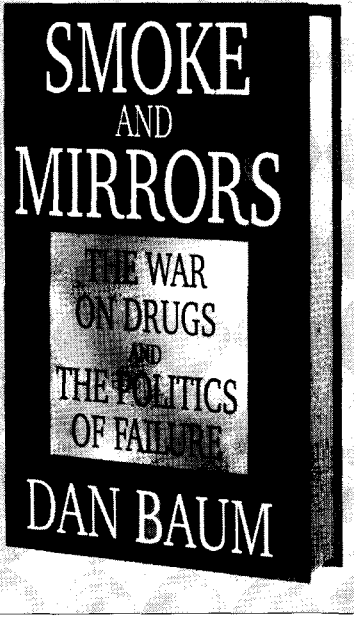
"Camelot," says Christopher Matthews, "*colorized* the career of John F. Kennedy," changing it in retrospect. Jackie was Camelot. An artist by temperament, she did for her husband in the ultimate crisis what a more mundane woman could not. Joe Kennedy had chosen well, indeed. Not only was she strong enough to stand up to murder, but her imagination was keen enough, under stress, to pick exactly the right set of visual symbols to fix her husband forever in the mind of the country as the hero he wanted to be. A wrenching ordeal, the Kennedy funeral was also a great piece of theater, staged by a master of effect and expression, who knew the importance—in a riderless horse, an eternal flame, a small boy saluting—of the way things looked. And the way things sounded: The prize essayist, the future editor, knew exactly what she wanted Teddy White to say. In a sense, the Kennedy funeral was her *Vogue* prize essay come to life. In the essay, she had honored Charles Baudelaire and Oscar Wilde—sinners, like Jack, yet idealists, who believed in "something higher" than themselves and their appetites. Jack was like them. But she was like Sergei Diaghilev, third man in the essay, the celebrated Russian impresario. "Though not an artist himself," Jackie had written, "he possessed what is rarer than artistic genius . . . the sensitivity to take the best of each man and incorporate it into a masterpiece all the more precious because it lives only in the minds of those who have seen it, and disintegrates as soon as it is gone." Jackie was such an impresario, choreographing a pageant with a cast of thousands, transitory but living on in

If you think Dole is tough on Clinton's drug record, read this!

Dan Baum's blistering exposé indicts Clinton (and every president since Nixon) for cynically pouring money into the War on Drugs, a policy "as expensive, ineffective, delusional, and destructive as government gets."

"Devastating. . . .
It brings the actors in the drama up close for the readers to cheer and hiss. A valuable work of reporting."
—*New York Times*

"Compelling. . . .
A lacerating look at how we got into this quagmire."
—*Los Angeles Times Book Review* (front page)



At bookstores now
Little, Brown and Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

film. As Klein writes, "Jackie made all the decisions for what would become the greatest pageant in American history. She had gotten her wish: She was the Overall Art Director of the Twentieth Century. But her wish had been granted at the cost of her husband's life."

In the end, the real difference between fact and fiction is the probability factor: Art is so much less puzzling than life. No novel would dare a denouement so shattering or characters so wildly complex. But the dissolute playboy, the disciplined pol, the student of history, were all the same person, as were the sybarite spendthrift, the stoic Madonna, the careful and devoted supermom. As Cassini says, there are four public Jackies: the girl and young woman; the regal first lady; the billionaire's trophy wife, dripping with rubies; and the working editor and mother in New York. When these books end, two of these Jackies are still in the future; the story is about to undergo a change in tone. Post-Camelot Jackie is the heroine of a picaresque novel, not a social one, an entertaining and resourceful figure who travels through an ever-changing scene. There is one more attempt at a Jamesian bargain: the Onassis marriage, a putative barter of fame for BIG money, facilitated by Jackie's attraction to roguish and dangerous men. But this fails on all but the financial level, proving by contrast how effective the original bargain was.

Jackie, who wanted a big life and real money, got more of both than she could have imagined. John Kennedy got to live inside history, an American hero and martyr. Joe Kennedy, who began it all, got a better deal than he could have foreseen: not just a running mate and a gracious first lady, but the woman to bury his son. ♦

Books

JUDY CHICAGOLAND

By Pia Catton

Judy Chicago has written her second autobiography, *Beyond the Flower* (Viking, 282 pages, $27.95). If you missed the first, don't worry; *Beyond the Flower* has everything you could possibly want to know about her. Chicago (née Cohen) is best known for *The Dinner Party*, an "installation" that made headlines when she first displayed it in 1979. Although she produced a number of works before and after it, *The Dinner Party* is the work that simultaneously put her on the map and has kept her off it since. In *Beyond the Flower*, Chicago explores the central question of her career: why *The Dinner Party* remains without a permanent site even though nearly one million people have seen it. She thinks the homelessness of her masterpiece is an example of the way in which feminist art has been discriminated against by the art world.

The Dinner Party is a table featuring place settings for 39 women, running the gamut from significant historical figures like Mary Wollstonecraft to mythical creations of feminist ideology like "Primordial Goddess." (Enlightened classicists will recognize her as the queen of the Land Before Patriarchy.) They vary from the truly influential—Queen Elizabeth I—to the truly obscure—Natalie Barney, a turn-of-the-century lesbian who established a gay-friendly salon in Paris.

Chicago's choices of *whom* to represent in this festival of gynocentrism are nowhere near as objectionable as the way she represents them. Each woman is commemorated by a ceramic plate and cloth runner. The runners depict scenes from the woman's life or "story." And each plate contains an image Chicago feels is the "physically defining characteristic of woman in an almost metaphysical sense"—an image of the vulva. The vulva can be "dark and molten," as Chicago writes of the image for Primordial Goddess, or trimmed with pink lace, as in the case of Emily Dickinson, but whichever way she shows it, the vulva is always there.

Just how does the vulva define women "metaphysically"? Chicago gives several answers in *Beyond the Flower*. There's the highfalutin answer: "The vulval image could act . . . as an entryway into an aesthetic exploration of what it has meant to be a woman—experientially, historically, and philosophically." There's the robot-feminist answer: The vulval image "was just one way of demonstrating that the oppression experienced by the women represented at the table was a result of their gender." There's the revolting answer: "Rippling out from their tiny centers is the insistence that female sexuality is to be celebrated and embraced, not hidden away, purchased, excised, or despised."

When *The Dinner Party* debuted at the San Francisco Museum of Art, it caused quite a sensation. Five thousand people flocked to the opening. *Mother Jones* and *Life* reported the show favorably. NPR's *All Things Considered* featured Chicago in an interview with Susan Stamberg. Later, when the piece traveled to the Brooklyn Museum, CBS News and *People* covered it. Chicago was invited to the *Today* show and the *Bill Moyers Show*.

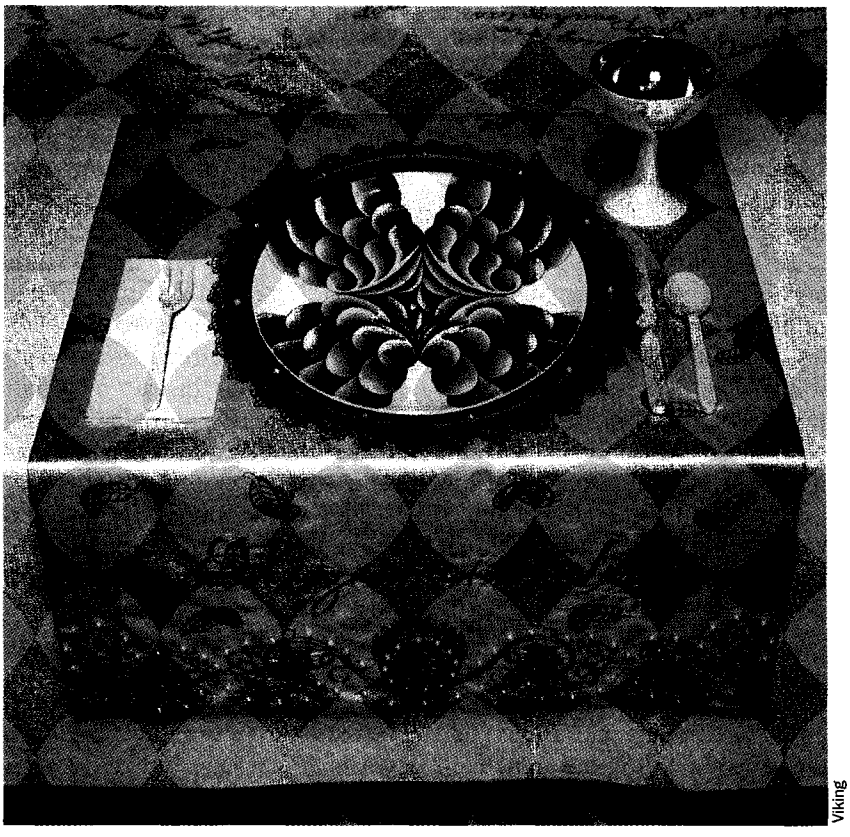
But not all the attention she

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

received was congratulatory. Hilton Kramer, then the art critic of the *New York Times*, wrote a particularly biting review of the piece in 1980. "For its principal image, *The Dinner Party* remains fixated on the external genital organs of the female body," he said. "Its many variations of the image are not without a certain ingenuity, to be sure, but it is the kind of ingenuity we associate with kitsch."

A decade later, when Chicago planned to donate her work to the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), the explicit sexual imagery caused a tumult in Congress. The school needed a $1.6 million grant from Congress to renovate the building in which *The Dinner Party* would be housed. In 1990 the House voted to withhold the funds; during the debate Rep. Dana Rohrabacher dismissed the work as "weird sexual art."

But it wasn't just conservatives and congressmen who were appalled by *The Dinner Party*. In *Beyond the Flower*, Chicago writes of her frustration when feminist theorists labeled her work "essentialist" and accused her of "degrading women through my use of vulval imagery." The criticism confuses Chicago, who claims to have coined the phrase Feminist Art—"a term that didn't exist until I invented it." In 1970, she created a Feminist Art education program, the first of its kind, at Fresno State University. The purpose of the program was to produce art "in which distinctly female subject matter would both be central and unabashedly expressed." *The Dinner Party* met this goal, but other feminists were apparently too obtuse to get the point: "I could not figure out how seemingly erudite women could completely miss the point—understood by so many less sophisticated viewers—that *The Dinner Party* entirely *celebrates* women's sexuality, history, and crafts."



Viking

Elizabeth I's place setting at The Dinner Party

But what exactly is Chicago's goal in celebrating these feminine wonders? What does Chicago expect feminist art to do for women? First and foremost, feminist art intends to give true voice to "women's ways of being." In order to allow for the true expression of the female voice, feminist art must move out of the mainstream, or "male-stream." It must be free of "male" rules for art, such as attention to form over content, a concept which hampers creativity.

Art informed by feminist values must focus on personal empowerment and thereby provide "an alternative to the prevailing paradigm of power, which is *power over others*." Most important, feminist art will be able to speak to a broad audience: "Feminist Art was . . . not intended primarily for a sophisticated art audience, one familiar with the sometimes arcane visual language of contemporary art." By design, everyday women will be able to understand the message of feminist art, that message being one of victimization and oppression.

Thus, feminist art relies on the assumption that women, regardless of their history, culture, or class, speak the same language—that of oppression—and need a collective "voice."

What gives Chicago the authority to proclaim that women all share status as victims of oppression? Nothing. And Chicago proves her error with a vignette in *Beyond the Flower*. When *The Dinner Party* failed to win the anticipated acceptance from the art establishment, Chicago set out on a new endeavor, called *The Birth Project*, a series of needlework images of women giving birth. It included over 50 women across the country who stitched Chicago's designs and then turned the work over to her to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

displayed at various locations. Chicago, however, did not anticipate that women might have priorities other than creating art: "We heard about angry husbands, who expressed considerable resentment that their wives wanted to stitch rather than spend time with them; about family members who came to town and simply assumed that the women would drop everything and squire them around; about calls from school-board members and PTA officials insisting that the women help with one or another seemingly pressing crisis." From her perch far above the rest of us peons, who can only dream of spending our days painting and sculpting, she sees oppression in the demands of ordinary life.

Chicago complains not only about men who want their wives to spend time with them, but also about the art world. "Women participate only marginally," she writes. "As dealers, critics, historians, and curators, they are deluded into thinking they have real power."

Dealers, critics, historians, and curators are not marginal participants in the art world; they are the art world. Indeed, many pages of *Beyond the Flower* are committed to Chicago's frustration that critics and curators are able to decide the fate of an artist and to control opinion. Funny that Chicago never considers *male* critics marginal. Does the power just fizzle away for a female art critic? How about for Mary Boone, doyenne of the New York gallery scene, whose Soho space made dozens of reputations in the 1980s?

Chicago wants not only women but women-centered art as well to receive the same recognition given to men and "male" art. This is especially true for *The Dinner Party*, which was, she writes, "intended to test whether a woman artist . . . could count on the art system to accept art with female content."

So it seems the establishment is to embrace feminist art even though Chicago segregates herself from the art world and thumbs her nose at it. The goal is contradictory and the enterprise is doomed to failure. Chicago designed *The Dinner Party* so that average viewers, outside the art community, could understand it. In doing so, however, she made it so obvious in its essential vulgarity that it leaves little to the imagination. In the attempt to elevate content over form, Chicago has left aesthetics behind. A radical feminist might find 39 vulvas beautiful, but for art critics and museum-goers alike, they are something else entirely.

It is doubtful that women would actually use the voice Chicago provides for them. "Since the UDC debacle," she writes, "there have been no other offers for permanent housing, the simple explanation for which is that there is apparently an absence of institutional will regarding women and women's art."

And here she blames women as well for not embracing her and her cause: "What will it take for women to turn their attention to the honoring of our own history and achievements?" Honor? Is it an honor to lock Sappho in the same jail of male oppression as Anne Hutchinson, to put Judith on an equal footing with Sojourner Truth, to set Ethel Smyth (who?) equal to Emily Dickinson? The women represented at *The Dinner Party*—the real ones, that is—would have had little tolerance for sexually explicit art, especially art that included representations of their own bodies. "Women," Chicago writes, "do not yet understand that they must financially support the art that speaks to them." Maybe they understand it all too well. Maybe, like those unwillingly "invited" to Judy Chicago's "dinner party," they resist being reduced to a vulva with a political agenda. ♦

Music

Miracle of Pop

By Mark Gauvreau Judge

In the last month, there have been several major surprises in the culture war over popular music. First, one of the music world's most liberal magazines issued a blistering rebuke of rock'n'roll's prevailing solipsism and spoiled-brat ethic. Then a respected classical-music critic published a ringing defense of non-classical music in a distinguished conservative magazine. And a terrific new album was released that reclaims the positive, pre-punk rock'n'roll traditions. Taken together, these events bode well for those of us who are cultural conservatives but often are made to feel that we are somehow betraying the cause because we like pop music.

Mark Gauvreau Judge is a Washington, D.C.-based writer.

The broadside against rock came in the pages of *Melody Maker*, the British music weekly. The *Maker* is usually one of the most glib celebrants of rock excess, yet in his assessment of the new album by R.E.M.—forefathers of alternative rock and recent recipients of an $80 million deal with Warner Brothers—critic Paul Lester sounded like a schoolmarm scolding a recalcitrant child. After establishing that R.E.M.'s *New Adventures in*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

High-Fi is one long gripe about the "problems" of rock fame, Lester rejected the new album as nothing more than "a mean-spirited indictment of the system that has indulged [R.E.M.'s] every whim." He called the band's thirtysomething lead singer Michael Stipe "the oldest whining teenager in town," who complains of his fame yet does everything in his power to cause scandal—in this case, by singing incendiary lyrics like "I can't say that I love Jesus." As for the sound of the band, Lester was unequivocal: Put on this album, and "feel gravity's pull as you freefall onto your bed from boredom."

As if Lester's shellacking weren't surprising enough, critic Terry Teachout, who caused a minor tempest last year by exposing the racism of some black jazz musicians, published a piece in the September issue of *Commentary* about the canonization of Duke Ellington by what passes for the jazz intelligentsia. Teachout noted that many black jazz critics who are not musicians are prone to lose themselves in their admiration for Ellington, often with disastrous results.

Albert Murray, he pointed out, has compared Ellington not only to Aaron Copland and Charles Ives, but to Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville. Stanley Crouch, writing in the *New Yorker*, called Ellington "the most protean of American geniuses" and elevated him to the company of Mark Twain, Buster Keaton, Fred Astaire, and Orson Welles.

"There is nothing to be learned by directly comparing a three-minute blues like Ellington's 'Ko-Ko' with a 45-minute symphony by Copland," Teachout wrote. "The composer of the former was incapable of composing the latter (and vice versa), yet both were masters of American music, each in his own way."

The acknowledgement that Ellington is a "master" is somewhat astonishing. The most conservative perspective on American popular music appears, of course, in Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*: "a nonstop, commercially prepackaged masturbational fantasy" was Bloom's assessment of rock'n'roll, a genre that owes quite a lot to Ellington. Yet

Kent Lemon

Marshall Crenshaw

Teachout makes the argument that comparing pop forms—in this case, blues—to classical forms is like comparing sculpture and painting. They are two different idioms, says Teachout, and can be individually appreciated as such. Songs are not symphonies, and vice versa. Once it is intellectually acceptable to think that music idioms can be as different as apples and oranges, it becomes possible to love the polyrhythmic jazz stylings of Nat King Cole, the twang of Hank Williams, and the symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms with equal passion. It even becomes possible to have different predilections within the same idiom: You can live for Wagner and snore through Mozart, adore Crowded House and deplore R.E.M. It's called acquiring taste.

The simple acknowledgment of different musical idioms, and that there can be high and low achievement within those idioms, opens up a new kind of acceptance for conservative music fans who can't stand the noxious clamor of most punk and rap yet don't want to jettison the Beatles and Boys II Men with it. It also spells relief for rock'n'rollers weary of the infantilism of groups like R.E.M. who want to develop appreciation for classical or jazz.

It also means I don't have to feel guilty about my enthusiasm for *Miracle of Science*, the wonderful new pop album by Marshall Crenshaw. Crenshaw made his mark in the early '80s, and his return is as unexpected as Lester's and Teachout's articles. The Detroit native first arrived in 1982 with a self-titled debut album that left reviewers fumbling for superlatives. A protégé of Buddy Holly (an image that Crenshaw, with his 1950s buzz-cut and horn-rimmed glasses, did nothing to discourage), Crenshaw offered what was often described as "beautifully crafted pop" that borrowed from rhythm-and-blues and Motown as well as Holly and launched him onto many year-end top-ten lists. To the Irish Catholic conservatives I was growing up with at the time—and their parents and kids—Crenshaw was the red-blooded American alternative to the punk New Wave music prominent then. While bands like the Dead Kennedys and Generation X sneered and R.E.M. first began to pout, Crenshaw had the anachronistic temerity to write joyful, innocent, hook-drenched songs with titles like "Girls" and "Rockin' Around in NYC."

Unfortunately, Crenshaw's luck didn't hold out. After a disappoint-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing second release the critics began to keep their distance, then remained lukewarm for ten years, despite excellent efforts like *Downtown* and *Life's Too Short*. By the early 1990s pop had a new king, grunge, which had exploded out of Seattle on the sound of a band called Nirvana. To teenage hipsters—the only people who exist, according to record executives—Crenshaw's songs seemed about as relevant as swing.

Now, all indicators point to the death of grunge—ear-splitting Seattle bands Pearl Jam and Soundgarden have both gotten lousy reviews for their latest albums—and Crenshaw has reappeared with his first studio album in five years. Following the reign of grunge and the re-emergence of punk, hearing *Miracle of Science* is like taking a warm shower after spending the day herding pigs.

From the opening chords of "What Do You Dream Of?"—a pop song that actually elevates rather than degrades the fairer sex—to the fadeout of the closing "There and Back Again," *Miracle of Science* is an album of truly great songs in a field where the mediocre—hell, the rotten—is hailed as genius. (Most overused term in rock criticism? "Brilliant.") These are songs with melodies to rival the Beatles'—even *Rolling Stone*, in its review of *Miracle of Science*, called Crenshaw "one of the supreme melodists of rock's last 15 years"—and lyrics about what pop songs should be about: girls, cars, trains, summer nights. Crenshaw even allows himself a little ironic dig at his trend-chasing critics, smirking his way through a cover of the 1965 hit "The In Crowd."

One should not get the impression, however, that Crenshaw is a Pollyanna. The standout track on *Miracle of Science* is "Only an Hour Ago," a rumination about getting in a car to leave behind "ten kinds of misery." With its choppy Buddy Holly chord structure and evocation of the open road, "Only an Hour Ago" is classic American pop, expressing melancholy with more depth and spirituality than a thousand heavy-metal chords. Crenshaw doesn't deny that life can be full of trouble; yet unlike so many of his peers, he knows the sound of that sorrow should invite rather than repel. Like a blues singer, he conveys his anguish with a minor chord and whisper rather than a wall of guitars and meandering self-absorption.

Unsurprisingly, my conservative Catholic friends from high school, many of whom are parents now, see Crenshaw's new album as the kind of music that offers common ground with their kids. Unfortunately, the rock'n'roll press—with the exception of Lester and Teachout—isn't any more interested in families than Hollywood is. Despite the fact that Crenshaw is a "supreme melodist," *Rolling Stone* buried his three-star review in its back pages in deference to R.E.M., which got four and a half stars for *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*. "They say it's always darkest before the dawn," Mark Kemp's cliché-ridden review of R.E.M. said. "For R.E.M., these have been dark days indeed." Oh, yeah, that $80 million deal is a real horror show. They can have it. I'd rather hang out with Crenshaw. He's no Mozart, but then, he's not supposed to be. ♦

Is it ever wise to improve on perfection?

Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen

and still only $39.95*

But read this ad for an even better deal!

Folk wisdom has it that it's seldom wise to fix what isn't broken and to attempt to improve on perfection. It is therefore with some trepidation that we introduce the *Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen, ("son of Fujiyama")* after having sold over 150,000 of the original in the last few years. Many believe that the *Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen*—made in Asia and with a cartridge that is the finest product of German stationery technology—is the most handsome and best-writing pen in the world. Fujiyama 2tm has stunning hi-lacquer gunmetal finish, fine gold-plated accents and snappy clip. It has perfect heft and feel and, of course, just like its predecessor, it writes like a dream. And with its new cushioned *Turbogrip*tm, which lets you write for hours without tiring, this pen has now been brought to the edge of the 21st century.

The most remarkable thing about the *Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen* is its price. We are the exclusive importers and distributors of Fujiyama stationery in the United States and are therefore able to bring you this updated model still at the same old price of just $39.95. But we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $79.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Discard those tacky ballpoint pens and those clumsy felt tips. Write smoothly and easily, give character and good appearance to your writing. And make a really great buy, an even greater one if you take advantage of our 3-for-2 "better deal". Get with it—get your *Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen(s)* today!

• The brand-new Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen is an object of beauty. Many have called it the "ultimate writing machine." It contains a large German-made ceramic-ball cartridge. It holds lots of ink, enough to write many letters and memos. As an added service, we include two extra refill cartridges with each pen.

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 797-7367
24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week.

For customer service and wholesale orders call 415-543-6675. We can apply your company logo to Fujiyama 2tm Pens on minimum quantities of 100 units.

Please give order **#1049C402** for Fujiyama 2tm Ceramic Pen(s). We need daytime phone # for all orders. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge (plus sales tax for California delivery). You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

since 1967
haverhills®
185 Berry Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ALOMAR SPITS ON OFFICIAL
Umpires to Strike in Protest

– headline

Parody

Perot Spits on Appeals Court Judge After Ruling

Judicial Branch of Government Strikes in Protest

Arafat Spits on Warren Christopher

Foreign Service Strikes in Protest; U.N. Condemns Israel

Susan McDougal Spits on Kenneth Starr

American Spectator Staff Strikes in Protest; Clinton Grants Pardon

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Finally A Tax Break for Self-Employed

MSAs
(Medical Savings Accounts)
Passed by Congress
Signed by President

a) $ into MSA = 100% tax deductible*
b) $ into health premium = 40% tax deductible

For many self-employed, a) and b) combined will cost less than conventional health insurance.

The law is more detailed than we can describe here.
For more information, call the MSA experts.

1-800-444-8990

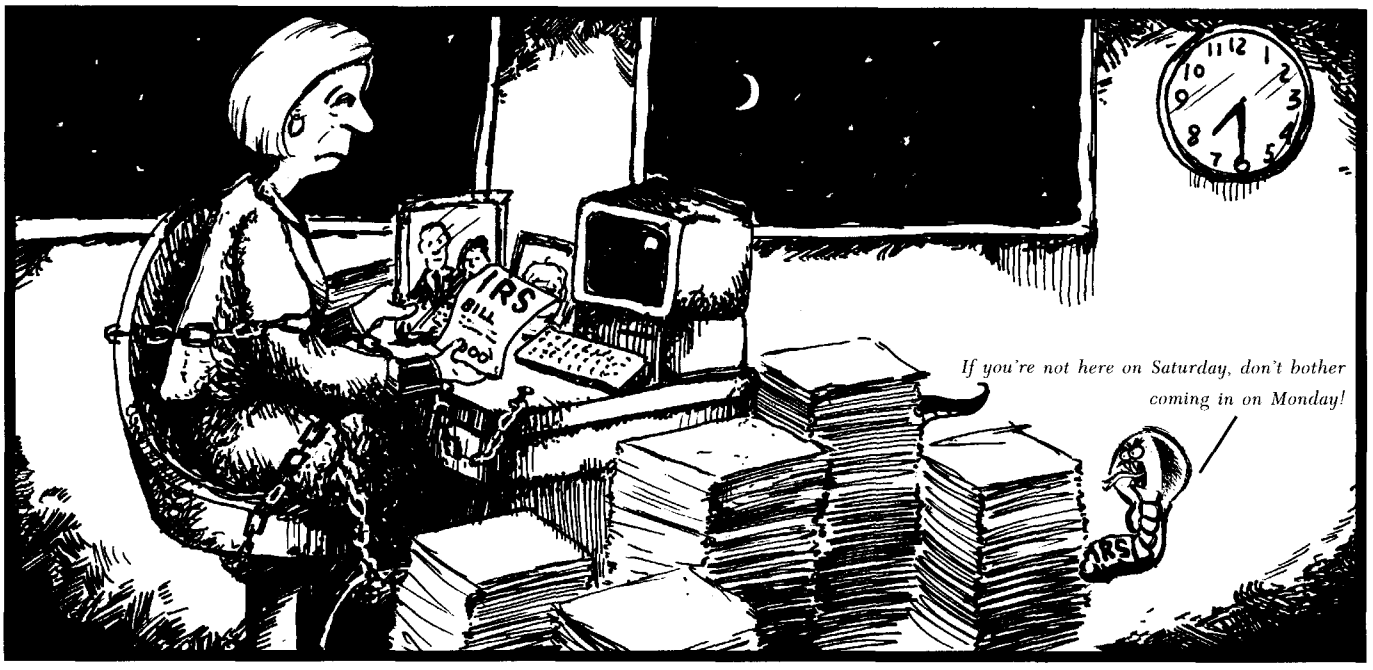
** Law dictates funding maximums.*

Golden Rule®

This will not be available in all states.

31094-996

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



©1996 Princeton Economic Institute, Ltd. All rights reserved.

Our income tax chains mothers to a job — and threatens our right to economic liberty.

While we argue about taxing the rich, nobody ever defines who the rich really are. According to the IRS, that definition was an annual income of $5 million in 1940. By 1992, that moved down scale to a very blue-collar $52,500. As the debate over making sure the rich pay their "fair" share rages on, we are ignoring the impact of rising taxation upon the American working *family*.

It now takes two incomes to support a family at a standard which once required only one income just 30 years ago. In the process our national debt has exploded and we have nothing to show for it.

Like citizens of Rome, we lose democratic *and* economic freedoms through taxes.

Democracy was once the light of economic freedom — the way out of serfdom where the state took 50 percent of your earnings. Today, that economic freedom is lost with the state extracting nearly 40 percent of the income from the average American family. It was only 25 percent in the 1960s! In Rome, it was obvious. Tax laws chained you to your profession and your location, the better to find you to collect Caesar's due.

Many women today are chained to their jobs because they lost their economic freedom to stay home and raise their children during early, formative years. If we truly care about the people of this nation and our future, we must honestly look at the impact of big government and the rising demands for taxation upon our middle class.

Mothers always pay for the foolishness of governments.

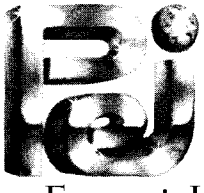
War is only the most common example. In government's all consuming quest to promise more to voters — mothers, women, and the American family have come out the losers. When we enslave that segment of society, our prosperity collapses like Rome, Spain, Russia, and so many others that have gone before us.

Promise freedom. Deliver serfdom.

History warns that economic decay has always been created by the extravagance of the state and in its wake inevitably follows social decay and rising crime. Only a fool ignores the lessons of history and that is why it tends so often to repeat.

We have a rare and brief moment in time — perhaps our last window of opportunity to reflect and change the course of posterity. To ignore the warnings of history, after the social and economic decay we have witnessed in the past 30 years, is to invite the fate suffered by all previous democracies — suicide. Society will be torn apart unless the taxation demands upon the American family are not tempered and controlled. If we do not restore economic freedom to the American family, we will become a mere footnote in the annals of the 21st century.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:



Princeton Economic Institute
Tel: 609-987-9522
Fax: 609- 987-0726

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED